

Pathways to Sustainability:
The Greening of US Faith Communities

by

Cybelles Tenaya Shattuck

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Natural Resources and Environment)
University of Michigan
2016

Doctoral Committee:

Associate Professor Julia M. Wondolleck, Chair
Professor Wayne E. Baker
Emeritus Professor James E. Crowfoot
Professor Paul Mohai

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research project could not have been carried out without the support and assistance of a great many people.

First, I am deeply grateful to the people in the fifteen case-study communities who shared their stories and insights with me. They gave generously of their time, offered hospitality in guest houses and homes, took me on tours and described the history of the lands they stewarded, invited me to dine with them, and prayed for the successful completion of my research. Seeing the wonderful work that these people do as stewards of the earth gives me hope that it is, indeed, possible to create an environmentally sustainable society that supports both human and non-human life. It is a privilege for me to share their stories, to the best of my ability, through this dissertation.

I have benefited from the guidance of a dissertation committee that brought together a range of perspectives to enrich the development of this research project. Julia M. Wondolleck made this project possible. During my first semester in the SNRE masters program, I studied research work she and Steven L. Yaffee conducted to examine factors that contributed to successful collaborative resource management projects. Their book, *Making Collaboration Work*, inspired me to wonder whether one could do a similar analysis of faith-based sustainability initiatives. Julia was supportive of the idea and courageously agreed to serve as advisor for a doctoral research project that took her into the unfamiliar field of religion. Fortunately, her gift for perceiving patterns in community social behavior meant that she was more than capable of guiding me through the process of developing this dissertation. Her insights enhanced the outcome of this project in immeasurable ways.

My thanks to Paul Mohai, who pointed out foundational questions I sometimes overlooked and helped make sure that my work was accessible to people across disciplines. I am indebted to Wayne Baker, who taught me to do field research and shared his enthusiasm for fieldnotes--the longer and more detailed, the better. It was good to have him along for this journey to fifteen new places. Finally, a special word of thanks to Jim Crowfoot who, although retired, generously agreed to serve on a committee because he cares deeply about the topic of faith-based sustainability. SNRE can be a lonely place for a person doing work in an unusual field; it was a joy to me to discover in Jim a person whose bookshelf closely resembles my own and to share random conversations when we both showed up at conferences that brought faith and ecology together.

I also benefited from a group of informal mentors that included Nancy Falk from Western Michigan University and, at SNRE, Steve Yaffee, Dorceta Taylor, and Rachel Kaplan. The best aspect of working in a windowless office on the second floor of the Dana building was the opportunity to be included in Steve and Rachel's community of scholars.

The PhD community at SNRE is a wonderfully supportive group of scholars and navigating this doctoral process was more fun because of their good company. I am especially

glad I got the chance to develop friendships with M’Lis Bartlett, John Graham, Shamitha Keerthi, Dana Jackman, and Samantha Shattuck (an honorary member).

Through information about resources and regulations, assistance with arcane procedures, and moral support, the exceptional staff in the SNRE OAP office helped me make the most of my time at the University of Michigan. My thanks to Sondra Auerbach, Diana Woodworth, Jennifer Taylor, Judy Byington, Lisa Yee-Litzenberg, and Erin Lane. One could not find a nicer group of people anywhere. I will miss the good conversations (and chocolate)

I have been extraordinarily fortunate to have financial support that made it possible to do field work in communities from California to Maine, Minnesota to Virginia. This support was provided by the USDA McIntire Stennis program, the EPA STAR Fellowship Program, and the Ecosystem Management Initiative at the School of Natural Resources and Environment. The latter also provided me with office space. I also received funds from SNRE and from the Rackham Graduate School of the University of Michigan that made it possible to attend conferences and focus on research and writing full-time.

One of the things that kept me going through this long process was the knowledge that there were people who wanted me to finish quickly so they could put the research findings to use to support faith-based sustainability efforts. It has been particularly gratifying to work with the staff and board of Michigan Interfaith Power and Light to “operationalize” my research findings as the dissertation developed. The opportunity to create a workshop and participate in MiIPL conferences helped focus portions of the dissertation. I am especially grateful to Leah Wiste and Jane Esper Vogel, who shared in the project of developing the Sustainability Workshop for Faith Communities, and to Pastor John Schleicher and Father Jim McDougall, who brought the wisdom of their pastoral experiences to development of the Stewards of Hope program.

Last, but certainly not least, this work would not have been possible without the support of my husband, Brian Wilson. It was Brian who suggested that I return to school and pursue a new field when I became dissatisfied with life as an adjunct instructor of religion. He then endured seven years (instead of the two we initially expected) with a part-time spouse who split her weeks between Kalamazoo and Ann Arbor, attended conferences that conflicted with family vacations, and made long research trips during the summer. His response was to give me a Garmin “so you will always be able to find your way home.” I am grateful for his patience, his devotion to our cats, and his tolerance for dust bunnies. And I am very glad that the job situation turned out quite well in the end.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	xvi
Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION	
THE GREENING OF US FAITH COMMUNITIES.....	1
AN OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS.....	4
Chapter 2. LITERATURE REVIEW	
INTRODUCTION.....	7
RELIGION AND PERSPECTIVES ON NATURE IN AMERICAN CULTURE.....	8
SOCIAL SCIENTISTS TEST THE “LYNN WHITE THESIS”.....	10
THE DISCOVERY OF FAITH-BASED ENVIRONMENTALISM.....	16
FAITH AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION.....	20
CONCLUSION.....	28
Chapter 3. RESEARCH METHODS	
INTRODUCTION.....	30
KEY TERMINOLOGY.....	31
A CASE STUDY APPROACH.....	33
SAMPLING FAITH-BASED SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES.....	33
CASE SELECTION.....	35
DATA COLLECTION	37
DATA ANALYSIS	38

STUDY LIMITATIONS.....	40
------------------------	----

Chapter 4

GENESIS AND EVOLUTION OF THE SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

An introduction to 15 case studies

INTRODUCTION.....	42
OVERVIEW OF THE FAITH COMMUNITIES.....	42
CASE CLUSTER I: FAITH COMMUNITIES WITH ORGANIC INITIATIVES.....	47
1. <i>Trinity Presbyterian Church, Harrisonburg VA</i>	47
2. <i>Madison Christian Community, Madison WI</i>	50
3. <i>Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation, Evanston IL</i>	52
4. <i>First Parish Church of Newbury, Newbury MA</i>	53
5. <i>Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor MI</i>	55
6. <i>St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, Palo Alto CA</i>	56
CASE CLUSTER II: GREEN CERTIFIED FAITH COMMUNITIES.....	59
7. <i>First Universalist Church of Rockland, Rockland ME</i>	60
8. <i>Trinity Presbyterian Church, East Brunswick NJ</i>	62
9. <i>Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, New Brunswick NJ</i>	64
10. <i>Temple Shalom, Aberdeen NJ</i>	66
CASE CLUSTER III: MONASTIC CASE SITES.....	68
11. <i>Congregation of St. Joseph of Nazareth, Sisters of St. Joseph, Kalamazoo MI</i>	68
12. <i>Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville MN</i>	71
13. <i>Villa Maria Farm, Sisters of the Humility of Mary, Villa Maria PA</i>	73
14. <i>Holy Wisdom Monastery, Benedictine Women of Madison, Madison WI</i>	74
15. <i>Our Lady of Angels Convent, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, Aston PA</i>	76
CONCLUSION: FAITH COMMUNITIES AS STEWARDS OF SPIRIT AND EARTH...79	

Chapter 5

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS: Key Similarities and Differences

INTRODUCTION.....	80
TRIGGERS OF INITIATIVE EMERGENCE.....	80
AN INTERPLAY OF FOUR CRITICAL DOMAINS.....	91
CONCLUSION.....	94

DOMAIN I

INDIVIDUALS: Sustainability Initiative Leaders

INTRODUCTION.....	95
RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	96

CHAPTER 6

INDIVIDUALS: People of Faith, Stewards of Earth

INTRODUCTION.....	97
MOTIVATIONS: INTERTWINED PERSONAL INTERESTS.....	97
1. ENVIRONMENTAL INTERESTS.....	98
2. RELIGIOUS INTERESTS	104
3. PERSONAL WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY	108
EFFECTS: COMMITMENT TO FAITH-BASED SUSTAINABILITY.....	109

CHAPTER 7

INDIVIDUALS: Leaders Who Make Things Happen

INTRODUCTION.....	111
LEADERSHIP CAPACITY.....	111
1. SUSTAINABILITY KNOWLEDGE.....	112
2. LEADERSHIP SKILLS.....	113
3. EMBEDDED IN THE COMMUNITY.....	117
SUSTAINING INITIATIVES: INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGES & RESPONSES.....	121
1. KNOWLEDGE DEFICITS.....	122
2. EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES.....	125
3. PERSONNEL CHANGES.....	130
SUSTAINING FACTORS REVEALED BY RESPONSES TO CHALLENGES.....	132
EFFECTS ON INDIVIDUALS: PERSONAL REWARDS.....	133

SUMMARY AND DOMAIN INTERACTIONS: How Individuals Affected Initiatives

INTRODUCTION.....	137
CHARACTERISTICS THAT ENABLED INDIVIDUALS TO LEAD INITIATIVES....	137
DOMAIN INTERACTIONS.....	138

DOMAIN II

FAITH LEADERS: Legitimizing Sustainability as a Faith Community Issue

INTRODUCTION..... 142

 MOTIVATIONS FOR PROMOTING EARTH CARE..... 144

 RESEARCH QUESTIONS..... 148

CHAPTER 8

FAITH LEADERS: Legitimizing Sustainability as a Faith Issue

INTRODUCTION..... 149

FRAMING SUSTAINABILITY AS A FAITH COMMUNITY ISSUE 150

 1. EARTH STEWARDSHIP..... 150

 2. SOCIAL JUSTICE..... 158

 3. SPECIAL ROLE OF RELIGION IN ADDRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES..... 160

FOSTERING AN INTENTION TO ENGAGE IN EARTH CARE..... 163

CHAPTER 9

FAITH LEADERS: Mechanisms for Legitimizing Sustainability

INTRODUCTION..... 168

MECHANISMS FOR PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY..... 168

 1. MECHANISMS RELATED TO RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY..... 169

 2. MECHANISMS RELATED TO ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT..... 175

SUSTAINABILITY INTEGRATED INTO VALUES AND PRACTICES..... 179

EARTH CARE’S EFFECTS ON FAITH LEADERS..... 180

SUMMARY AND DOMAIN INTERACTIONS: How Faith Leaders Affected Initiatives

INTRODUCTION..... 182

FOSTERING A SUSTAINABILITY SOCIAL NORM..... 182

DOMAIN INTERACTIONS..... 184

THE IMPORTANCE OF MESSAGE CADENCE..... 186

DOMAIN III

CONGREGATIONS: Arbiters of Initiative Capacity

INTRODUCTION.....	189
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CASE-STUDY CONGREGATIONS.....	190
RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	193

CHAPTER 10

CONGREGATIONS: Community Identity and Congregational Support

INTRODUCTION.....	194
CONNECTING EARTH CARE WITH COMMUNITY HISTORY.....	194
INTEGRATING EARTH CARE INTO COMMUNITY IDENTITY.....	206

CHAPTER 11

CONGREGATIONS: Congregational Engagement in Initiatives

INTRODUCTION.....	210
ENGAGEMENT OF CONGREGATIONS IN INITIATIVE DEVELOPMENT.....	211
TRAJECTORY 1. A GROUP PROJECT GREW INTO A COMMUNITY INITIATIVE.....	211
TRAJECTORY 2. A COMMUNITY ETHIC PRECEDED AN INITIATIVE.....	218
CHALLENGES THAT AFFECTED CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT.....	228
FACTORS THAT HELPED MITIGATE CHALLENGES.....	231
CONGREGATIONAL OWNERSHIP OF INITIATIVES.....	232

SUMMARY AND DOMAIN INTERACTIONS: How Congregations Affected Initiatives

INTRODUCTION.....	235
CONGREGATIONS AS ARBITERS OF INITIATIVES CAPACITY.....	235
HOW CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT AFFECTED GREEN TEAMS.....	236
HOW CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT AFFECTED RESOURCES.....	236
DOMAIN INTERACTIONS.....	238
EARTH CARE EMBEDDED IN COMMUNITY MISSION.....	240

DOMAIN IV

ORGANIZATIONS: Venues for Initiative Implementation

INTRODUCTION.....	243
CHARACTERISTICS OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS.....	244
RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	246

CHAPTER 12 ORGANIZATIONS: Operational Procedures

INTRODUCTION.....	247
ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURES AND GREEN TEAM OPERATIONS	247
1. INTERNAL GROUP OPERATIONS.....	248
2. INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE GREEN TEAM AND THE COMMUNITY.....	251
CONSTRAINTS: MISALIGNMENT OF PROCEDURES AND INITIATIVES.....	252
ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURES THAT FACILITATED INITIATIVES.....	254

CHAPTER 13 ORGANIZATIONS: Organizational Structures

INTRODUCTION.....	256
VENUES FOR IMPLEMENTING INITIATIVES.....	256
I. RELIGIOUS PROGRAM VENUES.....	257
WORSHIP SERVICES.....	257
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS.....	259
MINISTRIES.....	261
II. ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT VENUES.....	266
ADMINISTRATION.....	266
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT.....	269
CONSTRAINTS IMPOSED BY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE.....	272
STRUCTURES FACILITATED INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTATION.....	276

SUMMARY AND DOMAIN INTERACTIONS: How Organizations Affected Initiatives

INTRODUCTION.....	
VENUES FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND DOMAIN INTERACTIONS.....	
EARTH CARE INTEGRATED INTO THE RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION.....	

CHAPTER 14 CONCLUSION: PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABILITY.....	286
CONTRIBUTIONS AND INTERSECTIONS OF THE FOUR DOMAINS.....	287
THE ROLE OF RELIGION.....	294
DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	295
SEEDS OF HOPE.....	297
APPENDICES.....	299
CITATIONS.....	303

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1 Overview of the Fifteen Cases.....	46
Table 5.1 Types of Triggers for Sustainability Initiatives.....	78
Table 6.1 Individuals’ Motivational Interests.....	98
Table 7.1 Characteristics that Contributed to Leadership Capacity.....	112
Table 7.2 Challenges that Affected Individuals.....	122
Table 7.3 Sustaining Factors Revealed by Responses to Challenges.....	133
Table 7.4 Effects on Individuals Who Participated in Initiative.....	134
Table 7.5 Individual Leadership Factors and Their Interactions with Other Domains.....	138
Table 8.1 Faith Leader Motivations for Promoting Sustainability.....	145
Table 8.2 Framing Sustainability as a Faith Community Issue.....	150
Table 8.3 Elements Contributing to the Efficacy of Faith Leader Messages.....	164
Table 9.1 Mechanisms for Promoting Sustainability.....	169
Table 9.2 Faith Leader Contributions to Initiatives and Their Interactions with Other Domains.....	183
Table 10.1 Faith Community Characteristics.....	191
Table 10.2 Foundations for Earth Care.....	195
Table 10.3 Previous Activities that Contributed to Congregational Support.....	207
Table 11.1 Decision Processes for Adopting Earth Care.....	205
Table 11.2 Trajectory 1 Decision Processes by Case.....	206
Table 11.3 Trajectory 2 Decision Processes by Case.....	212
Table 11.4 Events that Triggered Discernment Processes by Case.....	213
Table 11.5 Factors that Influenced Congregational Support.....	236
Table 11.6 Locus of Earth Care Mission within Faith Community Mission.....	240
Table 12.1 Organizational Procedures that Affected Green Team Operations.....	248
Table 12.2 Organizational Norms that Enabled Earth Care.....	255
Table 13.1 Organizational Venues for Implementing Earth Care Activities.....	257

Table 13.2 The Greening of Administration and Facilities.....	266
Table 13.3 Enabling Factors Contributed by Faith Community Organizations.....	276
Table 13.4 Organization Contributions and Their Interactions with Other Domains.....	281
Table 14.1 Key Contributions and Enabling Factors in the Four Domains of Activity.....	288

LIST OF FIGURES

Map 1 Case Study Sites.....	43
Figure 1 The Four Domains of Activity and Their Key Contributions.....	92
Figure 2 Interactions between Individuals and the Other Domains.....	140
Figure 3 Interactions between Faith Leaders and the Other Domains.....	185
Figure 4 Interactions between Congregations and the Other Domains.....	239
Figure 5 Interactions between Organizations and the Other Domains.....	283
Figure 6 Contributions and Interactions of the Four Domains.....	294

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview questions.....	299
Appendix 2. Case Study Sites.....	301

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

THE GREENING OF US FAITH COMMUNITIES

In June 2015, publication of Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*, inspired great excitement from world media (e.g. *New York Times*, *Guardian*) leaders of the United Nations (Ban Ki-moon 2015), scientists (McNutt, *Science* 2015), environmentalists (Brune 2015), and religious organizations (e.g. World Council of Churches, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism). Because encyclicals present authoritative papal teachings for the whole Catholic Church, the pope's message that, "concern for the natural world is no longer 'optional' but is an integral part of the Church teaching on social justice," would become a doctrinal belief in a world religion with 1.2 billion members. Commentators speculated that *Laudato Si* would be a "game changer" that would affect the attitudes of American Catholics (DeCosse et al.) and motivate political leaders from around the world to reach an agreement about how to mitigate climate change during the 21st UN Conference of Parties in Paris in December of 2015 (Hirst 2015).

Media reports that lauded the encyclical as a new frontier in environmental activism were, however, misleading because they ignored the fact that religious leaders, including the two previous popes, had been calling on people of faith to protect the earth and its environmental systems for nearly half a century. In 1967, Lynn White published an essay in *Science*, in which he argued that Christianity had contributed to the worldview that led Western societies to exploit natural resources, degrade the environment, and create an ecological crisis. American and European theologians responded by developing a new field of eco-theology, which identifies scriptural passages and religious teachings that encourage believers to practice environmental ethics. Since its beginning in the early 1970s, this theological genre has continued to grow and has expanded to include all of the major world religions. In the 1980s, the National Council of

Churches created an Eco-justice Ministry that worked to promote faith-based support for environmental justice among Protestant denominations in the United States. In the 1990s, as rising awareness transformed climate change from an environmental issue to a social welfare issue, there was an upwelling of activity from religious leaders in the US and Europe. Leaders from Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, and Jewish communities formed the National Religious Partnership for the Environment to share resources and amplify faith-based messages about the need to respond to climate change (nrpe.org). In the same period, Prince Philip of England organized the Alliance of Religions and Conservation to help religious organizations around the world develop environmental programs based on their beliefs and practices (arcworld.org). In the first decade of the 21st century, a new organization called Interfaith Power and Light (IPL) emerged to promote a faith-based response to global warming through energy efficiency upgrades to houses of worship while the Evangelical Environmental Network organized a “What Would Jesus Drive” campaign to encourage purchase of fuel-efficient cars (WWJD 2002). During this same time period, all of the major denominations in the United States adopted formal statements calling on their members to care for the earth and support efforts to mitigate climate change.

Scholars hailed the emergence of eco-theology and faith-based environmental organizations, describing them as evidence of a “greening of religion” in the United States (Tucker 2003, Gottlieb 2006). Researchers who studied the new eco-theologies and faith-based environmental campaigns speculated about whether religion would be able to create a social movement to address climate change that would be similar to the civil rights movement of the 1960s (Gottlieb 2007, Kearns 1996). However, a few scholars challenged the idea that Western religions were becoming greener. They noted that people attending churches in Cornwall were unaware that their denomination, the Church of England, was engaged in a campaign to encourage environmental action in its member congregations (DeLashmutt 2011) and that surveys in the US indicate that Christians have lower levels of environmental concern than non-Christians and nonreligious individuals, a pattern that did not change between 1993 and 2010 (Clements et al. 2014).

Despite the survey data, there is evidence that some Christians, Jews, and other people of faith in the United States are taking action in order to make their religious communities and organizations more environmentally sustainable. They are making houses of worship more

energy efficient, installing solar panels, conserving water and other resources, restoring forests and prairies on their lands, purchasing local food, growing organic produce in community gardens, advocating for environmental justice, and participating in climate marches. People of faith use various terms to describe these actions such as earth care, creation care, restoring creation, being green, and sustainability, but what is striking is that they are taking action through the venue of religious organizations whose mission is to foster members' spiritual lives, rather than through the venue of traditional environmental organizations.

Surveys attempting to measure whether religions are greening by correlating religious affiliation with environmental concern do not adequately capture or explain the earth care activities that are occurring in some US faith communities. Moreover, the fact that some Catholic parishes engage in earth care while the majority do not, despite environmental pronouncements from three consecutive popes, indicates that theology and denominational leadership are not the sole, and perhaps not even the most significant, factors in determining whether people of faith undertake environmental actions. This fact begs the question why? Why are some faith communities pursuing sustainability initiatives while most are not? More Americans belong to religious organizations than any other type of voluntary associations (Putnam 2000) and, collectively, religious communities are the single most prevalent human organizations in the world (Pew 2015). Since religions are institutions that express social values and govern behavior, they provide a platform with significant potential for advancing social change. In a world confronting the realities of climate change and the imperative for environmental sustainability, the role of religious communities in facilitating institutional changes that enable resilience, adaptation, and sustainability is a surprisingly little-studied phenomenon. In particular, there is a dearth of research examining the empirical experience of the “greening” of religious organizations when such environmental initiatives do arise. What motivations and processes lead to emergence of sustainability initiatives in religious communities, what types of actions do they include, and how does religion affect their development?

This research project begins to answer these questions by exploring the development of sustainability initiatives undertaken by fifteen congregations in the United States. It uses the term “sustainability initiative” to describe the overarching goal of programs that implemented diverse earth care actions such as organic farming, energy conservation, and environmental justice advocacy for the purpose of reducing a congregation's environmental impact. The initiatives

selected for the study all undertook multiple activities and maintained them for at least four years. By focusing on cases in which congregations succeeded in developing and maintaining environmental initiatives, the research sought to identify factors that contributed to their success and could serve as a suite of best practices to assist other faith communities that want to engage in earth care. The project used qualitative research methods to gather data from people who were closely involved with the initiatives, asking about the motivations that inspired them to engage in earth care through the venue of a faith community and factors that enabled them to develop and sustain initiatives. The study focused on congregations because they are religious organizations in which members engage with religious teachings and participate in activities that express religious values. They are also bounded organizations with defined memberships, administrative systems, and organizational structures, which made it possible to identify patterns by comparing cases. Furthermore, in spite of some anecdotal reports on environmental actions in churches (McDuff 2010), no scholars have systematically studied environmental activities undertaken by congregations. Thus, congregations provided a context in which to examine religious and non-religious factors that affected emergence and implementation of sustainability initiatives within religious organizations.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS

The dissertation begins with a review of the literature (Chapter 2) in which scholars have explored religion's influence on attitudes and, to a lesser extent, behavior toward the environment in the United States. The review indicates that there is extensive research focused on theology but there have been no systematic examinations of the empirical experiences of faith-based earth care undertaken by congregations. Chapter 3 describes the methods that this research project used to address this lacuna in academic knowledge by: analyzing the types of earth care activities undertaken by faith communities; selecting a sample of cases for study that would be representative of these activities; collecting data through interviews, site visits, and documents; and developing case studies summarizing key elements that affected the development of earth care initiatives in each congregation. These case studies were then compared to identify shared patterns and factors that affected the emergence and development of the earth care initiatives.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the case studies, with brief descriptions of each community and its sustainability initiative. Chapter 5 describes the findings that emerged from cross-case analysis, which revealed an overarching pattern: in each case, initiatives began when key individuals took the lead and organized earth care activities through the venue of their faith community. Development of the resulting sustainability initiatives was shaped by the characteristics of these individuals and their interactions with the faith leaders, congregation, and organization that made up the faith community. This shared pattern provided the structure for an analytical framework that examined factors within the four domains of activity--Individuals, Faith Leaders, Congregation, and Organization—that affected the emergence and implementation of the sustainability initiatives.

The subsequent chapters are organized into sections for each domain of activity. The Individuals Section comprises Chapter 6 and 7, which examine motivations and leadership qualities that enabled individuals to effectively organize earth care activities within a faith community. The Faith Leaders Section comprises Chapters 8 and 9 and begins with an overview of the motivations that inspired clergy and leadership teams to promote earth care. Chapter 8 explores the messages through which faith leaders presented earth care as an issue requiring action from their faith communities and Chapter 9 considers how the mechanisms through which faith leaders promoted earth care affected the development of initiatives. The Congregation Section (Chapters 10 and 11) presents a brief summary of case-study community characteristics before delving into factors that influenced levels of congregational support for adopting earth care as an area of community activity. Chapter 10 focuses on community identity and historical practices, while Chapter 11 explores how different types of decision processes affected congregational involvement. Finally, the Organization Section examines operating procedures (Chapter 12) and organizational structures (Chapter 13) that provided opportunities, and sometimes imposed constraints, for implementation of earth care activities.

Each domain section ends with an analysis of the specific contributions that domain made to the sustainability initiatives and examines how factors from that domain intersected with other domains to further enable implementation of earth care activities. Chapter 14 concludes the dissertation by summarizing the contributions, enabling factors, and intersections from all four domains, which together form a matrix of observations, some of which suggest best practices for developing a sustainability initiative in a faith community. Chapter 14 also reflects on the role of

religion in these cases of faith-based earth care. It is important to remember that the primary purpose of a religious organization is to support the religious lives of its members. The case-study communities adopted earth care as an activity that was consistent with their religious mission but they are not environmental organizations, they are religious organizations working to protect the environment as part of their religious missions. Therefore, this research paid special attention to the processes through which faith communities reflected on the relationship between earth care and their religious missions and what factors affected decisions to incorporate earth care into the religious organizations.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Scholarly literature focused on the interplay between religion and environmental concern and behavior in the United States is shaped by two overarching academic trends. First, its emphases have been influenced by the secular environmental movement and socio-political contexts, which affect the types of questions being asked and how data is interpreted. Second, as in other areas of environmental research, a variety of scholarly domains have taken interest in the topic, and their diverse methodological approaches have gradually revealed complexities in the influence of religion on environmental attitudes and behavior that lead to new questions and new directions for research.

Scholarship that examines how religion affects behavior toward the environment in the United States can be loosely divided into four categories focused on: 1) general cultural patterns; 2) correlations between specific biblical beliefs and environmental attitudes; 3) theological bases for environmental ethics; and 4) faith-based environmental action. As early as 1934, Max Weber argued that religion played a role in the emergence of modern American capitalism and, in the late 1960s, scholars within the domains of history and philosophy of science theorized about connections between religious worldviews and cultural patterns of resource usage that created the conditions leading to the environmental issues of their era. During the 1970s, a few theologians and religious studies researchers explored how religion shaped attitudes toward nature through comparative studies focused primarily on scriptural teachings, often contrasting biblical religions with Asian and Native American traditions. In the 1980s, as the environmental movement was linked with “culture war” rhetoric, sociologists employed survey methods to gauge whether particular theological themes or denominational affiliations influenced attitudes toward environmentalism. Interest in the role of religion expanded in the last two decades of the

twentieth century as an increasing number of religious leaders began to publicly promote the need for an environmental ethic among people of faith. Some scholars within environmental domains and religious studies domains celebrated this call for faith-based environmental action as evidence of an impending transformation in American behavior. However, it is only in the twenty-first century that academic research has begun to systematically examine *how* religion affects environmental behavior.

RELIGION AND PERSPECTIVES ON NATURE IN AMERICAN CULTURE

In the 1960s, scholars began to analyze Western attitudes toward the environment (or nature) either as part of a larger study of the development of western civilization or because of a narrower focus on the origins of environmental conditions in the United States. In this context, religion, which expresses and transmits social values, became a topic of interest for scholars who focused on how religious worldviews might affect cultural perspectives on nature that would, in turn, shape the way a society behaved toward nature. This early phase of literature on religion and environment laid the foundations for two persistent trends: one argues that (biblical) religion fosters anti-environmental attitudes and behavior while the other takes a more nuanced position and suggests that religion can be positive or negative, depending on historical context.

Among the first examples of the latter position is *Wilderness and the American Mind* (1967), in which Roderick Nash traces cultural ideas about nature that affect development of modern American preservation philosophies. In the process, he locates the roots of both positive and negative attitudes toward nature in the Bible and he argues that both modes of interpretation appear throughout US history, with selection of perspective determined by context and experience. Nash details the role of Romantics and Transcendentalists in developing the philosophical basis for the emerging preservation movement and the heritage of the Puritans in the conservationists' preference for active management. He also describes the prevalence of religious language in aesthetic arguments for the creation of Yellowstone National Park.

Nash's focus is limited to cultural perspectives that shape the development of American preservation/conservation movements and, consequently, when science replaces religious language as the vocabulary of environmentalism in the second half of the twentieth century, he describes the effect of the new themes for the growing success of the movement rather than analyzing changes in the role of religion. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, on the other hand, focused

specifically on implications of the elevation of science over religion in the environmental discourses of 20th-century Western culture. In a series of lectures at the University of Chicago in 1966, he argued that the environmental crisis arose precisely because separating science from religious metaphysics removed frameworks of morality, which then opened the way for abuse (Nasr 1968). He also criticized theologians for neglecting environmental issues and called on them to focus less on history and more on how people fit into the cosmos. Throughout his lecture series, later published as the book *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man* (1968), Nasr distinguished between *religion* (Christianity), which he believed could provide a moral framework for environmentalism, and 17th century European *cultural* ideas such as Rationalism and Cartesian dualism, which allowed for a distinction between matter and spirit that transformed nature into a collection of objects to be used.

Other scholars seeking to explain the origins of the western environmental crisis were less charitable toward religion. In 1967, Clarence Glacken's *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century* theorized that Western perceptions of nature were rooted in an assumption that the planet was brought into existence by divine agency and designed for humans. Western thought thus legitimated human manipulation of the environment under the logic of the design argument; humans are partners to God, ordering and cultivating the earth according to a divine plan. The argument that Christianity (and Judaism) created an anthropocentric worldview that set the stage for the scientific and economic systems of modern Euro-American societies was widely accepted and persists in scholarship on the emergence of modern science (e.g. Harrison 1998), exclusion of nature from urban planning (McHarg 1969), and failure to act on knowledge from the field of ecology (Passmore 1974).

Within the nascent field of modern scholarship on religion and environment, the most widely influential text theorizing about religion's influence on environmental behavior was Lynn White's essay, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," published in the March 1967 volume of *Science*. White suggested that finding appropriate solutions to global and complex environmental problems required analysis of the fundamental presuppositions underlying modern technology and science. Being a medieval historian, he traced those suppositions back to the Middle Ages, where he focused on what the Christian church taught people about the human relationship to the environment. He identified two key issues: first, conflict with nature-

worshipping pagans had given Christians a deep antipathy for the idea that nature could be sacred; second, the biblical creation story in which God gave humans dominion over the animals and plants had given Europeans a sense that human beings were superior to nature and entitled to use it at will. Since religion seemed, therefore, to be a root cause of the attitudes underlying the modern environmental crisis, White thought the remedy must also be essentially religious. Western culture needed to replace or reinterpret historical Christian attitudes to create a cultural ideology that would be compatible with sustainability. He wound up by suggesting that the life and writings of St. Francis of Assisi offered evidence that Christians could replace arrogance with humility and come to see themselves as one species among many in a world that was sacred to its creator. This could replace the problematic medieval ideas and provide a foundation for a more sustainable approach to resource use.

White's essay triggered strong responses within academic, theological, and mainstream environmental circles. Environmentalists and some scholars tended to oversimplify the argument by ignoring White's emphasis on historical context and focusing solely on the idea that Western religions created a "dominion" worldview that laid the foundations for resource exploitation (Black 1970, Worster 1977). In the 1970s and 1980s, some environmentalists and religion scholars would go on to argue that Asian and Native American religions were inherently more "pro-nature" (Suzuki 1953; Jung 1972a, 1972b), a perspective that drew periodic scholarly critique (e.g. Tuan, 1968, Stoll 1997) but remained a persistent element in the popular romantic view of non-biblical religions that coincided with the counterculture search for alternatives to Western social institutions. These themes pervade works such as *The Making of a Counter Culture* by Theodore Roszak (1969), which contrasted white exploiters of nature with Native Americans who believe that the land is sacred and deserves respect.

SOCIAL SCIENTISTS TEST THE "LYNN WHITE THESIS"

Social scientists became curious about the Lynn White thesis in the 1980s as they began to explore motivations for environmental concern and activism. White's ideas may have seemed particularly apropos at a time when the newly created Moral Majority (founded in 1979) was promoting a political agenda linked to conservative Christianity. Since the Moral Majority was closely affiliated with the Reagan administration, which was removing government support for environmental programs and increasing economic development of natural resources on

federally controlled lands and waters, a correlation between conservative Protestantism and anti-environmental attitudes seemed plausible. This association would have gained further credence when Secretary of the Interior James G. Watt, a dispensationalist Christian (a tradition that divides history into a series of seven eras with the modern age being a final era that will culminate in destruction of the earth and God's creation of a "new earth" to replace it), explained to Congress that his methods of environmental management were guided by the conviction that he did not know "how many future generations we can count on before the Lord returns, [so] whatever it is we have to manage with a skill to leave the resources needed for future generations." Environmentalists played up the first half of Watt's statement, suggesting he would not protect the environment for future generations because he believed the earth would soon come to an end, and ignored the second half, thereby increasing public perception that conservative Protestant Christianity might be antithetical to environmental concerns.

In this context, some scholars tried to empirically evaluate White's hypothesis that belief in divinely sanctioned human dominion over nature would have a negative effect on treatment of nature. Hand and Van Liere (1984) surveyed people in Washington State and determined that denominational differences influenced exposure to the dominance of nature doctrine. They argued that members of conservative churches, who encountered this doctrine most frequently, were least likely to express environmental concern. Eckberg and Blocker (1989) also concluded that conservative Christianity was most likely to correlate with decreased concern, but they focused on biblical literalism as the cause. Their 1989 study using a random sample of residents in Tulsa, Oklahoma, looked at environmental concern in relation to four "religion" variables: being Jewish or Christian (as opposed to having no affiliation), being conservative Protestant, believing that religion is important, and believing in a literal interpretation of the Bible. Only biblical literalism proved a significant predictor for lower levels of concern.

In 1993, Andrew Greeley followed up on Eckberg and Blocker's work in an article titled "Religion and Attitudes Toward the Environment." Using a question about willingness to spend money on the environment in order to measure levels of environmental concern, he also found a correlation between biblical literalism and decreased concern. However, he then tried to explain why this distinction occurred by comparing participants' images of God (strict versus gracious) and their political and moral attitudes (on a conservative-liberal scale). He found that those who had more benign images of God tended to be more concerned about the environment, regardless

of religious affiliation. Furthermore, although a rigid religious orientation correlated with negative attitudes toward spending on the environment, the correlation disappeared when political and moral rigidity were taken into account. This led Greeley to conclude that it is not the biblical creation story that explains environmental attitudes; it is the style of the religious group.

In 1993, social scientists gained access to a data set that would allow numerous new analyses. The General Social Survey (GSS) included a special module on environmental beliefs and behaviors as well as information about religion. This coincided with a period of widespread public concern about environmental threats leading up to the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit or Rio Summit).

In 1995, Guth et al. attempted to measure the effects of religion on perception of environmental policy using information from the General Social Survey and other existing data sets. They hypothesized that members of traditions with strong eschatological themes, which encourage people to think about faith as preparation for the end times with its promised “new heaven and earth,” would be less concerned with environmentalism. The data partially supported their thesis. Evangelicals were least concerned about the environment, followed by Protestants, Catholics, and Seculars, however, there was variation within the groups so that more “engaged” members (those who attend church most frequently) were less likely to express concern even if they belonged to less eschatological traditions. Since greater frequency of participation is associated with more conservative religious beliefs, the authors suggested that conservatism is the best predictor of low environmental concern, rather than denomination or doctrine.

Most of these early surveys built off of Lynn White's theory; they assumed that the biblical idea of human dominion correlated with low environmental concern and that biblical literalism and images of a strict, judgmental God, which characterize the most conservative forms of Evangelical Christianity, could prove that exposure to dominion theology explained why these conservatives were less likely to join environmental efforts (e.g. Woodum and Hoban 1994, Wolkimir et al. 1997). However, disaggregation of denominations and consideration of effects from non-religious variables weakened the apparent correlations. Boyd (1999) found that after demographic controls there were no significant relationships between belief in God, biblical literalism, gracious image of God, or church attendance and environmental beliefs or behaviors. Only fundamentalism was a significant variable predicting less support for environmental

spending, decreased perception of danger from pollution, and lower frequency of environmental behavior. But even this apparent correlation might be the result of conservative political affiliation rather than theological teachings, a distinction that could not be determined based on the survey data.

The story became even more confusing when researchers started to focus on how religion affected environmental behaviors rather than attitudes. Kanagy and Willits (1993) found no connection between religious affiliation and behavior, despite correlations between greater frequency of church attendance and reductions in pro-environmental attitudes. Eckberg and Blocker (1996; cf. Wolkimir et al. 1997) found that greater religious participation correlated with higher levels of personal environmental action (recycling and signing petitions about environmental issues) and cultural greenness (e.g. eating organic produce). Although rates of personal and organized environmental action were lower for people in more conservative Christian traditions than in liberal Christian traditions, they still existed.

These discrepancies reflect the difficulty in using social surveys to test a theory based on history. James D. Proctor and Evan Berry (2005) offer an overview of the empirical social science studies that attempt to test the Lynn White thesis. They point out that there are disjunctions between White's theory and what social scientists are able to test. White's argument begins with culturally diffuse ideas inherent in Christianity, which then shape the institutions of science and technology and lead to the impacts on the environment evident today. By contrast, quantitative social science research has a much smaller timescale determined by the few decades for which survey data exists and focuses on a "relatively undifferentiated mass of individuals" who may not have much impact on social values or institutions. In other words, White based his theory on correlations between theological ideas in written texts and large-scale historical patterns of technological development, whereas social scientists are trying to discern the beliefs of individuals and whether they affect attitudes and activities at a particular moment and place. The data and methods of assessment are quite different. Furthermore, it is difficult to measure individual religiosity, environmental concern, and the relationship between them.

Nevertheless, Proctor and Berry give social scientists credit for finding proxies by which to measure religiosity and environmentalism and point out the need for further studies to address some of the complexities apparent in the diverse results. They identify three areas of particular interest. First, although there are some weak correlations between religion and environmental

concern, no studies have provided “unqualified vindication” of the Lynn White thesis. The authors note, however, that these studies have created some new puzzles such as the apparent paradox in which religiosity, defined by behavior, seems to negatively influence environmental attitudes but positively influence environmental behavior. Second, the relationship between religion and environmental concern among individuals seems much more complicated than Lynn White's theory, especially since White did not disaggregate Christianity into denominations. This tendency to lump denominations together also characterizes the social science surveys, many of which are using preexisting data sets with limited differentiation of denominational affiliation and even less distinction among congregations.

Proctor and Berry's third area of interest addresses the possibility that ideas of dominion may not be fundamentally religious. It is possible that religious groups have a suite of ideas available to them and they mobilize those that fit broader political agendas. This third topic can also serve as a reminder that religions are not static; they are continually adapted to the needs of people at a particular time and place. The efforts to test the Lynn White thesis do not take this process of adaptation into account. When public concerns about environmental issues grow, religious leaders and organizations respond, just like other social institutions. Some of these responses may be efforts to address the concerns of the congregation, some may be efforts to be topical and increase membership, and some may have more to do with the personal interests of the clergy than of the people in the pews. The failure to consider that there might be change over time is a shortcoming of these studies. It is possible that associations between conservative religion and low levels of environmental concern were stronger in the 1980s and had changed by the 1990s. Behavior may also have changed as recycling programs and organic food movements became more common.

A narrow focus on the Lynn White thesis and correlations between conservative beliefs and environmental attitudes also fails to explain positive connections between religion and environment. Kempton et al. (1995) used a combination of interviews and surveys to explore American values that might motivate environmental concern and action. They found that religion, both Judeo-Christian and more abstract feelings of spirituality, were one of three sources of environmental values.¹ Between 69% and 79% of respondents agreed with the statement, “Because God created the natural world, it is wrong to abuse it” (91). Even if many of

¹ Anthropocentric and biocentric values made up the other two.

these respondents belong to liberal traditions or no religion, the percentage is high enough to include some evangelicals. The Lynn White surveys do nothing to explain why liberal Christians, let alone evangelicals, would be concerned about the environment.

The progression of metrics for assessing environmental concern in these social science studies may reveal other factors that affected the role of religion in shaping environmental behavior. In the 1980s, scholars focused on religion's influence on attitudes of environmental concern, which they defined in terms of support for *federal* policies and increased financial resources for implementation of regulations. By the 1990s, the surveys defined environmentalism in terms of *personal* environmental actions such as recycling, energy conservation, and buying organic, as well as policy advocacy. This shift indicates scholarly engagement with an environmental movement that was expanding its focus from wilderness and wildlife preservation to inclusion of broader concerns with public health and ecosystem services.² But it also reflects public responses to historical events such as energy crises in the 1970s, toxic exposure issues at Love Canal in 1976-8, discovery of the Antarctic ozone hole in 1985, the oil price shock of 1990, increasing reports of food-borne illnesses in the 1990s, and growing awareness of climate change. These issues, in turn, sparked development of various new laws and programs, which changed regulation of pollutants and integrated practices such as recycling into American infrastructure. Consequently, perceptions of what constitutes environmental behavior and how desirable it is to engage in such behavior changed significantly over the period of time in which this research took place.

In the 1990s, as public awareness of climate change increased, leaders from across the spectrum of American religious denominations became vocal advocates for environmental action. Christian clergy cited the same biblical passage that the Lynn White thesis blamed for Christian anti-nature attitudes as evidence that humans had a divine mandate to practice sustainable stewardship of God's creation (Kearns 1996). They argued that when God gave human beings dominion over the creation, He was assigning them responsibility to tend it, not to exploit it. The emergence of this Creation Care movement, which demonstrated that people from

² The concern with public health was not, of course, actually new. Concerns about protecting urban water supplies and preventing pollution that causes diseases have played roles in development of U.S. environmental regulations since the 18th century. However, the modern environmental movement that defined "environmentalism" for much of the 20th century tended to focus on forest, water, and wildlife issues outside of urban areas.

biblical traditions could use their faith to promote environmentalism, essentially put an end to simplistic interpretations of the Lynn White thesis. It also opened up a new field of study for scholars interested in the potential for religion to affect behavior toward the environment.

THE DISCOVERY OF FAITH-BASED ENVIRONMENTALISM

The first scholars to study the emerging “religious environmentalism” tended to focus on theological texts and denominational statements calling for environmental ethics. These materials were accessible, plentiful, and compatible with the methods of History, Political Science, and Religious Studies. Moreover, they reflect the dominant activity of religious environmentalism in the 1970s-1990s, which focused on motivating environmentally ethical behavior through promotion of faith-based morality. In a similar vein, a few researchers have argued that environmentalism itself has become a spiritual tradition for some people and can be considered a form of “green religion,” expressing beliefs that nature is sacred and requires moral actions from humans (Skolimowski 1985, Taylor 2010).

One of the first texts to describe a “greening” of mainstream religion was Nash’s work on *The Rights of Nature* (1989), in which he looked to eco-theology for its contributions to the development of modern environmental ethics. He argued that many of the theologians writing in the 1970s were reacting to Lynn White,³ but that there was already a tradition of environmental concern among earlier Christian theologians that set a precedent for using scripture to support a biblical environmental ethic. Leading proponents of a Christian environmental ethic include Joseph Sittler, who had begun to consider the issue in essays such as “A Theology for Earth” (1954), which argued that the environment was as much a part of the divinely created community as humans, and “The Care of the Earth” (1964), a sermon in which he encouraged people to see nature as inherently valuable rather than something to be valued only for its usefulness to humans. Building on this background, he helped encourage a new generation of theologians to take up “Ecological Commitment as Theological Responsibility” (1970) because he believed that care of the earth was a religious imperative. A few theologians followed suit and challenged Christians to become involved in environmental issues through articles such as “Land Use: A

³ The role of White’s essay in the genesis of modern eco-theology is also treated in Roger Gottlieb, *This Sacred Earth* (1996) and Bron Taylor, “Introduction” in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* (2005). Most of the social science studies cited in this literature review also mention Lynn White’s impact.

Theological Concern” (Baer 1966) and book-length treatments such as *Brother Earth: Nature, God and Ecology in Time of Crisis* (Santmire 1970). Over the next decades, seminary theologians continued to develop ideas that challenged dualistic traditions separating the material and spiritual realms (e.g. Fox 1988) and argued for a religious environmental ethic to counter consumerism (e.g. McFague 2001).

Literature exploring this eco-theology identifies themes and scriptural foundations and eventually expands beyond mainstream seminary scholarship to bring in newer theological perspectives. Laurel Kearns (1996) identifies three models of Christian environmental ethics based on her 1987-1992 field studies of the emerging Christian ecological movement. First, there is a Stewardship Ethic, which is based on God's commands in the Hebrew Bible and stresses individual behaviors. This model appeals to Evangelicals. Second, an Eco-justice ethic places greater emphasis on institutionalized social inequality and draws on Christological liberation theologies that emphasize Jesus’ ministry to the poor and critiques of social inequities to promote societal change. Eco-justice is more common among Catholic and mainline Protestants. The third ethic, termed Creation Spirituality, is an amorphous category incorporating new age spiritualism, deep ecology, and pantheism. Although people subscribing to such beliefs may not express them through mainstream religious institutions, they share a common perception that anthropocentrism, which leads to alienation from nature, is at the root of environmental problems and that the solution requires a widespread shift toward a more holistic or biocentric consciousness.

David Kinsley (1995) and Roger Gottlieb (1996) expand analysis of theological resources for promoting environmental ethics beyond traditional Christianity. Gottlieb describes environmental theologies from eco-feminism and the writings of some deep ecologists who perceive nature as sacred. Kinsley’s description of “the contemporary discussion of ecology and religion” includes Christian theologians, animal rights ethicists, deep ecologists, ecoactivists from Greenpeace and Earth First!, eco-feminists, and modern nature writers like Gary Snyder and Barry Lopez. In his descriptive analysis of these diverse ecological spiritualities, Kinsley identifies themes that appear across the traditions: nature conceptualized as a living whole; links between human identity and place-knowledge; kinship between humans and animals; reciprocity; interdependence; unity of all existence; assumption of an underlying moral/ethical unity

connecting human and nonhuman; need for human restraint; criticism of anthropocentrism; and (in the United States) a desire to reclaim the sacrality of nature.

Although Gottlieb and Kinsley describe eco-theologies proffered by theologians and activists, they are less interested in analyzing the impact of these beliefs than in spreading awareness of them. This tendency is prevalent within literature on religion and environment in the 1990s. The Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard Divinity School organized a series of conferences between 1996-98, which led to publication of the “Religions of the World and Ecology” book series. Each volume focuses on a different world religion. The chapters are dominated by theological analyses of scriptures and sacred narratives, which the authors present as bases for normative environmental ethics that have potential to be used as resources in the respective traditions. There is, however, very little scholarship describing current religious activities focused on ecology, except for a few overviews of emerging eco-theologies in Christianity and Judaism.

The dominance of theology as a focus of study in the literature on religious environmentalism in the United States is not surprising given the traditional emphasis on beliefs and scriptural analysis in Christian studies.⁴ Scholars of Christianity naturally privilege this subject and the rapidly expanding body of eco-theological treatises provided a wealth of data. It is, however, also worth noting that interest in beliefs and attitudes was prevalent in several fields of research on environmentalism during the late 1980s and 1990s. At that time, Environmental Psychology stressed education models for changing attitudes, on the assumption that attitude leads directly to behavior (e.g. Hines et al. 1987, Ajzen and Fishbein 1980). Similarly, scientists assumed a knowledge deficit explained resistance to action on climate change, a problem that could be remedied through communication of data and risks, which would transform perceptions and lead to action. In this context, it made sense for some religion scholars to focus on philosophical frameworks that could create a change in attitude, and to share in the general assumption this improved knowledge would also lead to appropriate action.

By the end of the twentieth century, as environmental issues morphed into sustainability issues incorporating environmental, economic, and social components, scholars across domains

⁴ Christianity focuses more on establishing orthodoxy (“correct beliefs”) than any other major world religion, an emphasis that has influenced the development of Religious Studies methods and theories among western scholars.

began to look more closely at a wider range of factors affecting behavior. In sync with growing recognition of the complexities governing policy decision processes and psychological motivations for behavior, researchers studying religion as a motivator for behavior toward the environment began to look more closely at factors and activities beyond theology.

The work of Robert Booth Fowler (1995), a political scientist who traces *The Greening of Protestant Thought* from 1970 to 1990, illustrates this transition by raising questions about the efficacy of eco-theology for motivating consequential action. Over the two-decade period studied, he perceives a shift toward a general consensus that Christians should take action to address environmental issues. However, he also identifies numerous variations in theology among different denominations and argues that this diversity, which is a hallmark of American Protestantism, limits the potential for consensus about how to conceptualize and act on a Christian environmental agenda. He points out that faith-based environmental actions in the period he studied usually took place at the national level, as groups within organizations such as the National Council of Churches or national denominational offices hosted conferences, developed policy statements, and passed resolutions. Some denominations developed educational materials for dissemination to congregations, but most of the action took place in Washington DC rather than at the community level. He suggests that the Protestant environmental movement up to 1990 proved most effective when wrestling with theology and developing stewardship ethics but was less effective in attempts to take political action, due to lack of consensus and inadequate understanding of political processes. He also criticizes faith groups for stressing education of children, which he sees as an easy way out that avoids making hard choices in the present.

Fowler is a forerunner in a gradual shift of focus among researchers curious about how religion affects human behavior toward the environment. In the twenty-first century, scholars are broadening their research to explore empirical experiences of faith-based engagement with environmental and/or sustainability activities and beginning to ask questions about structure, process, and social context as well as theological framing. This reorientation of scholarly emphasis coincides with a shift in the environmental literature written by people of faith. Early eco-theology came out of seminaries and academic institutions but, at the turn of the century, congregational clergy and faith leaders working for religious environmental organizations began to write about and promote sustainability. These new voices correlate with rising concern about

climate change and greater participation of religious organizations in global environmental discussions at venues like the Earth Summit. Organizations like the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, a collaboration of Catholics, Protestants, and Jews formed in 1993, and the Eco-justice Working Group of the National Council of Churches (estab. 1983) began to develop materials congregations could use to teach about climate change and to explain why sustainability should be of concern to religious groups. The beginning of the twenty-first century brought a proliferation of popular faith and environment literature. There is a notable shift in emphasis within this new theological literature, as the previous era's focus on abstract ethics is being replaced with practical instructions explaining how congregations and individuals can reduce energy use and live more sustainably. Although this new literature has not been systematically studied, perusal of a representative sampling shows that the current writings are characterized by calls to put faith into action at congregational and individual levels (E.g. Benstein 2006 (on Judaism); Robinson and Chatraw 2006; Sleeth 2006; Brown 2006; Abbate 2009; Cohen-Kiener 2009; Sabin 2010)

FAITH AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

In 2011, Bron Taylor, editor of the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*, issued a challenge to scholars of religious environmentalism, calling for “a robust scientific investigation of the ‘religion’ variable in the quest for sustainability,” as a counter to the optimistic pronouncements about the “greening of religion” that have proliferated in recent years. Taylor points out that much of the research hypothesizing the existence of this greening trend is “based not on randomized datasets but on cases where religious individuals and small groups are demonstrably environmentally concerned and active” (255). Consequently, the data do little to explicate what proportion of a religious group has environmentally positive attitudes and behavior, nor does it compare religious and secular groups or track changes over time. Moreover, Taylor is concerned that the studies assume religion is the variable that is responsible for the environmental practices and beliefs, thereby overlooking other potential variables such as the possibility that “environmental concern by religious actors” may just as easily be explained as “a *reflection* of the culture in which the religious actors are situated, not the *result* of the religion’s ethical ideals” (255; emphasis in original).

Taylor is particularly skeptical about scholarship that cites burgeoning biblical eco-theology as evidence for a greening trend in western Christianity. He points to survey research from the Barna Group, an evangelical polling agency that carefully distinguishes among subgroups of American Christianity, in which environmental views among Christians have been compared to those of the wider public. In a study conducted in 2008, they found that Christians were similar to most Americans in their openness to environmental concerns but that these issues were not “top-of-mind concerns.” Of particular interest was the finding that 89% of Christians and 85% of churchgoers had never heard the phrase “creation care,” the term used by most Christian environmental organizations in their outreach efforts. Moreover, 64% of churchgoers “reported that they never heard any sermons ‘about how Christians should respond to the environmental issues’” (Taylor: 257).

The Barna survey supports Taylor’s assertion that there is need for additional research to better understand the interplay between religion and sustainability. Literature addressing the role of religion in shaping actions in congregational contexts and individual lives is still relatively rare and often anecdotal. A few scholars have begun to explore the activities, rather than the theology, of faith-based organizations working to affect policy and behavior. There are also some studies of sustainability practices within specific religious communities and analyses of how issues like climate change intersect with the beliefs and practices of people in the pews.

On the policy front, Laurel Kearns and Michael Moody have examined the role of religious organizations in federal-level environmental advocacy. Kearns (1997) described Operation Noah’s Ark, through which Christian and Jewish religious groups mobilized people of faith to prevent weakening of the Endangered Species Act in 1995-6. She argues that parachurch groups like the Evangelical Environmental Network were able to foster evangelical commitment to this task in ways that were not possible for denominational agencies, which were likely to be divided over the issue.

Michael Moody (2002) studied environmental advocacy within mainline Protestant denominations, and reveals that they have been a little-recognized but consistently active force at the national level since the 1960s. Through interviews and documentary research, he analyzes: public activities and tactics; argument framing, selection of issues, and faith foundations for legitimacy; and impact of faith-based advocacy efforts. He also examines the difference between the mainstream environmental movement and the broader Eco-justice emphases of mainline

churches, which led the churches to focus their efforts on stewardship issues that included hunger relief and poverty as well as energy and waste disposal.⁵ He chronicles the formation of various organizations focused on national and international advocacy, leading campaigns such as the efforts to protect the Endangered Species Act, which was coordinated by the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, and the proliferation of denominational efforts to promote policy responses to climate change. The people interviewed feel that they have succeeded in making religious voices part of the policy process because they represent large constituencies, that they are most effective when they build coalitions across denominations, and that they wish they were as effective at gaining media attention as evangelicals. Moody notes that, historically, the secular environmental movement influences the issues of concern for religious environmentalists, however, there has been little public coordination between the two communities. He attributes their mutual reluctance to join forces to uncertainty about how to communicate and discomfort due to past experiences in which environmentalists blamed Christians for western “dominion” culture while people of faith charged environmentalists with caring more for the welfare of spotted owls than human beings. Although Moody raises questions about how much effect these national faith-based efforts have at the congregation level, he sees Protestant environmental advocacy as having a “distinctive, if limited, influence on public debate, mobilization, and public policy” (261). He also concludes that secular environmentalism would benefit from adoption of a moral framework related to those Protestants have already developed, which will be necessary to deal with the effects of globalization and climate change.

Congregational and personal-level actions are the newest areas of exploration for researchers interested in the role religion plays in motivating environmental behavior. Scholars have begun to do field studies to examine the interplay between doctrine, attitudes toward environmental issues, and behavior. Michael DeLashmutt (2011) examined whether denominational environmental statements and programmatic efforts affected environmental behavior among members of the Church of England. The Church developed a set of environmental doctrines in the 1990s, but these were not incorporated into any institutional

⁵ Eco-justice is essentially environmental justice. Eco-justice emerged from the National Council of Churches’ traditional social justice emphasis on poverty alleviation rather than the more common origin of environmental justice as a response to local environmental threats to health, however, over time, the two movements expanded to include overlapping issues.

practices. In 2006, church leaders inaugurated a campaign to bring environmental theologies down to the parish level. Five years later, DeLashmutt held focus groups among congregants attending six Anglican churches in Cornwall to find out how much the parishioners knew about the environmental theology and campaigns of the church. He found a significant disparity between the Church's formal statements and mission to encourage environmentalism and the perceptions of people at the parish level, where no one was aware of the doctrines. Furthermore, none of the parishioners knew that church leaders had been actively lobbying in support of climate policies at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in 2009.

Even if people within faith communities are aware of denominational positions on environmental issues, the role of beliefs in shaping action seems to vary among individuals. Tarakeshwar et al. (2001) conducted a study of people within the Presbyterian Church USA to examine correlations among three factors: the belief nature is sacred, theological conservatism, and environmental behavior. They found clergy, elders (members elected to serve on a leadership committee), and members had very different levels of conservatism, with the elders being much more conservative than the clergy or the members. Moreover, clergy who believed in the sanctity of nature were more likely to engage in pro-environmental behavior than members with similar beliefs, and clergy who were theologically conservative were less likely to engage in pro-environmental behaviors than elders with similar attitudes. The authors suggest that clergy may identify more closely with their beliefs and, hence, be more likely to act on them, while members may see religion more as a spectator event.

This distinction between lay and clergy applications of faith is not necessarily universal. Carr et al. (2012) conducted interviews with pastors and lay members of evangelical churches in Dallas, Texas, to examine relationships between religious beliefs and views on climate change. The researchers did not find any particular lay-clergy differences. They did, however, note that the relationship between beliefs and perspectives on climate change for all participants were more complex than previous survey-based research had documented. They identified a core set of interrelated religious beliefs, including biblical inerrancy, God's sovereignty, human sinfulness, eschatology (theology concerned with death and the end of the world), and evangelism (preaching the Christian gospel), which the evangelicals used to describe their perceptions of climate change. The interviewees were skeptical of non-evangelical scientists and generally unaware of organizations like the Evangelical Climate Initiative or evangelical leaders

who are advocating for climate change action. Some were uninterested in climate issues, which they saw as a distraction from their primary focus on building a relationship with God. Others indicated that they would be interested in hearing about climate change from their own pastors but did not trust scientists. Analysis of the beliefs used to describe personal perspectives showed that the same doctrines could be used to both support and challenge the validity of climate change. For example, one person might see global warming as a sign of the end times while another might argue that the apocalyptic language of climate scientists is overblown since only God can decide when the world will end. However, specific beliefs did affect attitudes of concern. Belief in God's sovereignty and in eschatology seemed to reduce levels of concern about climate change.

The researchers noted that small variations in similar religious beliefs sometimes resulted in greater acceptance of anthropogenic effects on environment, which suggests that previous assumptions about correlations between specific doctrines and environmental attitudes were much too simplistic. Furthermore, sources of information matter; interviewees indicated that they would be more inclined to accept information from trusted sources, such as Christian scientists and their own pastors, than from unknown scientists. Despite the variations in perspectives on climate change, researchers found unanimous support for environmental awareness and action "*if motivated by concern for God's creation*" (289; italics in original text), which they theorize could provide an alternative way to frame initiatives that promote sustainability.

Katherine Wilkinson's more comprehensive exploration of evangelicals and climate change echoes the patterns in Carr et al. In *Between God and Green: How Evangelicals Are Cultivating a Middle Ground on Climate Change* (2012), Wilkinson describes the development of the Evangelical Climate Initiative (ECI), an effort to promote a response to climate change led by a core group of evangelical pastors. Through interviews and focus groups, she explores the experiences of the leaders who created the ECI and whether their efforts are having an effect on the people in the pews. She describes the campaign's use of biblical foundations, the organizations through which the early leaders worked, the formation of national outreach campaigns, and the socio-political conflicts that forced evangelical climate care leaders to leave positions in denominational institutions to found new organizations. She then goes on to hold focus group interviews with lay evangelicals, revealing a disjunction between the perspectives of the leaders and the congregants.

Among Wilkinson's interviewees, lay people affirm the importance of creation care and caring for the poor (neighbors), but do not accept that these ethics extend to climate care. Interestingly, the participants in these evangelical focus groups do not cite any of the theological positions that scholars have theorized would explain lower levels of environmental concern among conservative Christians (human right of dominion over the creation, associations between environmentalism and paganism, or beliefs about divinely ordained end times). Rather than having a theological basis, their attitudes derived from skepticism about the science, especially human causation of climate change. When presented with the text of the Evangelical Climate Initiative, some congregants became more inclined toward acceptance of anthropogenic climate change because they noted that the signatories included evangelical leaders, however most people discounted even these leaders if they did not know who they were. Wilkinson suggests that there are two underlying causes behind churchgoers' doubt. First, the creation-evolution debate, which was revived in the school textbook battles over Intelligent Design theories during the late twentieth century, created a general distrust of science among conservative evangelicals. Second, because evangelicals identify as politically conservative, they became less open to acceptance of climate science as global warming was politicized and right-wing think tanks mobilized to challenge the legitimacy of the science during the 1990s. A third issue that arises in the focus groups is the evangelical emphasis on personal responsibility. The interviewees do engage in environmental behavior such as recycling and affirm the importance of lifestyle changes but are less accepting of legislation or regulations, which the author perceives as a general resistance to systemic approaches to addressing climate change. She suggests that core theological notions that emphasize *individual* free will and salvation through *personal* relationship to God, along with distrust of institutional structures associated with federal government, may indirectly contribute to evangelical disinterest in climate care.

Wilkinson's research demonstrates the mixture of religious and non-religious influences that shape people's worldviews, even among people who are actively engaged with their faith communities. She also corroborates the findings of Delashmutt and Carr et al., that congregation members may be unaware of denominational environmental teachings. These studies illustrate the need for additional qualitative research examining the empirical experience of faith communities in which people engage in environmental action, to better understand the motivations and processes through which their efforts have emerged.

The challenge of addressing climate change forms the substrata for much of the more recent literature on religion and environment. In the “Introduction” to a special issue of the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* dedicated to examination of how religions engage with climate change, the editors organize the existing research on religion and climate change into five categories. First is the large body of prescriptive scholarship linking theologies and ethics to the climate crisis. This is basically eco-theology with a climate change theme. Second is an overlapping body of literature that asserts religious participation will be important for mobilizing the world to combat climate change. A third category is made up of texts directed toward specific faiths that attempt to mobilize people within those traditions. The fourth category contains polls and surveys relating religious beliefs and climate change attitudes. Finally, there is a newly emerging fifth category focused on social-scientific investigations (Veldman et al. 2012).

The first three categories correspond to the literary patterns for the broader subject of religion and environment cited above. The first is a climate-focused subdivision of eco-theology and the third correlates to the newer field of theological literature from congregational clergy and leaders of faith-based environmental organizations. The second category corresponds to scholarship from religious studies, history, political science, and environmental science that describes eco-theology. The fourth category aligns with the social science surveys cited above.

The editors of the journal describe the fifth category as the field that will begin to test the assumptions of the other fields. This domain will focus on qualitative research, examining the experiences of people in various faith-based environmental organizations, in congregations, and in environmental movements with spiritual attributes, like GreenPeace and Earth First!, that may be outside of traditional faith traditions.

Although the journal editors limit their focus to religion and climate change, the findings of Carr et al. cited above suggest that it would make sense to expand the focus to religion and sustainability, which can include climate change but can also incorporate actions toward the environment that are undertaken for other reasons. Within this category, one can include the literature on Faith in Action mentioned above as well as a few extant studies of faith communities engaged in environmental activities.

In the United States, some Catholics have been connecting theology and denominational statements with environmental initiatives in their congregations. The most detailed studies of this

trend thus far focus on monastic communities that are integrating sustainability into their daily practices. Sarah M. Taylor (2000) combined surveys and interviews to describe the religious environmentalism of Catholic nuns, many of whom base their efforts on the theology of Father Thomas Berry (1988, 1999). The nuns discuss some of the challenges they have encountered, especially from people who worry that treating nature as sacred might be a type of idolatry. The book provides a good overview of the range of activities being undertaken by Catholic sisters in the United States but has little information on the processes through which these efforts have been implemented. More information about the faith-based environmental activities within some Catholic religious orders can be found in John Carroll's *Sustainability and Spirituality* (2004). Carroll focuses on theological resources from Thomas Berry and Native American spirituality that legitimate ecological sustainability and describes promising examples of faith in action undertaken by a few communities of monks and nuns in the United States. He also theorizes that monasticism provides a counterculture lifestyle that allows monks and nuns to question dominant social systems and choose alternatives. Although the author does not include enough data from the communities he describes to substantiate this theory, the idea is intriguing and would make a good topic for future research.

Unlike Taylor and Carroll, whose descriptive accounts of green communities within one religious tradition emphasize theology and objective, Mallory McDuff (2010) begins to explore structural factors that shape congregation-level environmentalism. She writes about religious environmental activity in a variety of Christian congregations around the United States where she interviewed people. She organizes her data according to types of work being done including: food ministries, energy efficient construction or renovation, environmental justice, and environmental education. McDuff theorizes that environmental efforts are most successful when they can be incorporated into preexisting programs, such as adding local or organic foods to a soup kitchen or incorporating green building practices into a construction project that was already part of the long-range plan. Her book also includes some information about the local context to explain why a church takes up a particular activity.

Fletcher Harper (2012) has developed one of the first analyses of factors that enable congregation-level resource conservation based on his observations as director of GreenFaith, an interfaith organization that works with faith communities to help them integrate the environment

into their ministries.⁶ He notes that many faith communities are unable to move from eco-theology to action, despite the ideals expressed in denominational statements of environmental ethics. He attributes successful initiatives to leaders within the congregations, whether clergy or lay people, who combine a commitment to steward the resources of the faith community with a commitment to steward the environment. To be effective, these leaders must also have knowledge of how to achieve results within their particular community, which requires an ability to build consensus around action, to organize volunteer efforts, and to mobilize appropriate human and financial resources.

CONCLUSION

The academic literature describing religion's effect on human behavior toward the environment (or nature) in the United States follows a trajectory that moves from the general to the specific, from simple to complex. Sweeping cultural generalizations derived from analysis of prescriptive textual sources were gradually challenged by surveys testing the assumption that particular religious beliefs automatically lead to specific environmental attitudes or behaviors. The results of these surveys raised new questions and generated interest in empirical studies to unravel the complex interplay of religion and environment revealed by the sociological studies.

The earliest research asked questions about how religion, with particular emphasis on Christianity, contributed to the cultural worldviews and social structures of western societies that created the context for a modern environmental crisis. Most scholars assumed religion determined cultural norms which, in turn, shaped behavior. In the 1980s, as the "culture wars" developed and environmentalism became associated with social-political identities, researchers shifted from analysis of the whole American society to a question about whether religion could explain the differences in perspectives between liberals and conservatives, who were associated with different Christian denominations. Social scientists' efforts to answer that question through survey studies led to greater awareness of the complex array of factors influencing individual attitudes and behavior. Simultaneously, the emergence of faith-based environmental campaigns across the spectrum of American denominations in the 1990s further undermined any simple theories about correlations between specific scriptures or theological traditions and

⁶ This essay is not scholarly or peer-reviewed, yet is valuable as a report based on empirical experience with nearly 100 congregations and leadership training for 50 GreenFaith Fellows.

environmental attitudes or behavior. Despite the evidence from these social science studies, which suggested the need for empirical research to explore how religion might be affecting behavior among people of faith, most religion scholars studying the new “religious environmentalism” continued to concentrate on eco-theologies and denominational statements.

Nevertheless, as in other academic fields focused on sustainability, twenty-first century scholarship seeking to understand how religion influences behavior toward the environment is beginning to shift away from analysis of normative ethical assertions toward research designed to examine the empirical experiences of people who are putting faith into environmental action. Scholars such as Mary Evelyn Tucker and Bron Taylor, who helped create the academic field of Religion and Ecology, have issued calls for fieldwork research to explore whether the emergence of eco-theology correlates with a “greening of religion.” In this time of accelerating climate change, religious communities may have particular potential for facilitating institutional changes that will enable a transition to more environmentally sustainable social systems. Therefore, there is need for more nuanced quantitative surveys and qualitative studies of people in faith organizations to better understand the emergence of faith-based environmental action. This dissertation seeks to address some of these gaps in knowledge by using qualitative field research to explore the empirical experiences of faith communities that have implemented sustainability initiatives in the United States.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODS

INTRODUCTION

While it is logical to assume that faith-based environmentalism is motivated by religious teachings, recent research suggests that a more complex array of factors may be involved (Eckberg and Blocker 1989, Guth et al. 1993). Research examining adoption of environmental behaviors in a religious context suggests that it is not religion itself, but religion under certain circumstances that inspires people to engage in particular actions (Gottlieb 2006, DeLashmutt 2011). Consequently, although most religions now have formal denominational statements expressing normative appeals that advocate environmental behavior as a moral course of action for their members, there may be other factors motivating and guiding the establishment and functioning of sustainability initiatives within faith organizations. Knowing more about the processes through which faith-based sustainability efforts emerge, including attention to religious and non-religious factors, will fill gaps in current knowledge about the role religious groups can play in fostering environmental behavior.

This research project employs in-depth comparative case-study analysis to examine factors and dynamics affecting emergence of congregation-level sustainability initiatives. Congregations are local religious organizations with leadership structures, defined bodies of members, and programs that include worship, religious education, and other activities. They are of interest as a context for research because it is at the community level that people experience the effects of policies and are able to engage in sustained individual and collective action. This project used field research to gather data and develop case studies describing sustainability initiatives in fifteen faith communities in the United States. Analysis of the case study materials followed an interdisciplinary approach that drew on knowledge from the domain of religious studies combined with insights into human behavior from the domains of social movement theory, conservation psychology, and collaborative process.

Religious studies provides information about theological frames and organizational polity, which shape congregational actions. Religion played a significant role in past eras of social change in the United States, contributing ethical cultural frames and resources to abolition and civil rights movements (Morris 1984). Social movement theory (Morris and Mueller 1992) and recent scholarship on religion and social capital (Smidt 2003) elucidate factors affecting the role of faith organizations as agents of collective action. Insights into influences on individual behavior are drawn from conservation psychology. Of particular interest are behavior-change models that explore the effects of values, social norms, and social support, all of which are prominent aspects of religious groups (McKenzie-Mohr and Smith 1999). The emergence of community-based sustainability initiatives seems to correlate with development of deliberative and inclusionary processes that involve citizens in decisions about community development. Collaborative process scholarship illuminates why and how communities-of-place and communities-of-interest pursue sustainability and offers tools for analyzing the distinctive attributes of processes taking place within communities-of-faith such as congregations (Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000).

KEY TERMINOLOGY

The unit of analysis for this research project is comprised of *sustainability initiatives* undertaken by *congregations*.

The term “initiative” refers to a set of actions undertaken for the purpose of reducing a faith community’s impact on the natural environment. Earth Day worship services or earth-care themed Bible study may serve as precursors to an initiative, but these types of activity do not constitute initiatives because they do not involve changes in community infrastructure or behavior that affect the community’s use of resources. A faith community that has undertaken a sustainability initiative is one that is engaged in activities such as conservation behavior through reduced use of water and energy, resource management through sustainable land stewardship practices, or policy advocacy work to promote regulations that protect air, water, and food.

Defining the initiatives to be studied in relation to a “sustainability” objective of “improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems” (IUCN 1991) offers a broad umbrella under which to explore the diverse environmental activities being implemented by faith-based organizations. These activities range from habitat

restoration to resource conservation through energy efficiency and recycling, from support for organic, local, and fair-trade foods to social justice advocacy for policies to improve the quality of life for disadvantaged people. Faith groups use a variety of terms to describe the motivations and goals of their actions. In some cases, they are responding to environmental crises, either addressing a specific issue like climate change or expressing a general concern for the environment. In other cases, people are motivated by a moral vision for a “just sustainability” that emphasizes “the need to ensure a better quality of life for all, now and into the future, in a just and equitable manner, whilst living within the limits of supporting ecosystems” (Agyeman et al. 2003:5). When describing the goal of their actions, people of faith use terms such as restoring creation, creation care, earth stewardship, and earth care. Only recently have they begun speaking of “sustainability,” however the term is gaining popularity, partly because it avoids the social conflicts associated with references to climate change or environmentalism that have become linked to liberal political identities. This dissertation uses “sustainability initiative” to describe programs for undertaking environmental actions within faith communities because the term is acceptable to people in diverse religious traditions and because all of the activities enacted under the various rubrics cited above can be subsumed under an overarching sustainability label.

Although there are interfaith and denominational organizations engaged in sustainability efforts, this study limits its focus to congregations for several reasons. First, congregations are locally bounded religious organizations with leadership and governance structures, defined memberships, specific locations, and fairly quantifiable material and social resources. These shared attributes facilitate comparison across cases. Second, because formal congregations are recognized as faith communities by both members and outsiders, there is no ambiguity about defining them as religious organizations, thereby avoiding definitional problems that have arisen in studies of “nature religion” (Albanese 1990) or deep ecology as spirituality (Taylor 2010). Finally, unlike interfaith organizations, in which employees and volunteers are primarily engaged in fulfilling the specific mission of the organization, congregations are communities of faith with diverse memberships of individuals with assorted goals and levels of participation. These aspects of congregations may influence the establishment and functioning of faith-based sustainability efforts in these faith communities so it will be easier to understand the processes of developing sustainability initiatives in this type of religious organization if they are treated

separately from environmental interfaith organizations that have their own distinct social structures.

It is, however, important to take note of interactions among interfaith, denominational, and secular organizations that engage congregations in their sustainability initiatives. Therefore, the local faith-based sustainability activities examined in this study are not limited to efforts initiated and implemented solely within a single congregation. The initiatives researched also include congregation-level efforts enacted under the auspices of external organizations or in response to campaigns and information from external sources.

A CASE STUDY APPROACH

As noted in the Literature Review, previous scholarship has not succeeded in generating persuasive theories about how religion affects behavior toward the environment and there are no systematic analyses of factors influencing congregation-level actions. Consequently, rather than testing extant theories about faith-based sustainability initiatives, this research project uses in-depth case study comparisons to both discover new theories and extend related theories (Snow et al. 2003) from fields of research focused on social movements, environmental psychology, and collaborative resource management. The theories generated by this fieldwork and analysis may, then, be further tested and refined through future research.

Case study methods are particularly well suited to addressing research questions about the motivations and processes through which communities of faith develop sustainability initiatives because of their efficacy for examining factors that affect particular human behaviors. As Yin comments in his description of the benefits of case-study methods, “In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when “how” and “why” questions are being posed when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (1994). Therefore, this project uses comparative in-depth case study analyses to investigate factors that trigger emergence and institutionalization of faith-based sustainability initiatives as well as the reach and substantive impact of these efforts.

SAMPLING FAITH-BASED SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

The first step in development of a list of potential study sites in which to examine congregation-level sustainability initiatives was to identify the range of environmental activities

being undertaken by faith organizations in the United States. Academic and denominational literature and websites for organizations that promote or study religious environmentalism served as resources for exploring current faith-based environmental activities in the United States. In 2012, when this study began, the websites for Interfaith Power and Light, the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, the Forum on Religion and Ecology (Yale University), Earth Ministry, GreenFaith, and Faith in Place (Chicago) had lists of brief case studies that recounted earth care projects carried out by faith communities. These case studies provided a data set that could be used to analyze the range of faith-based environmental activities in the US. After examining stewardship stories and case studies on these websites, it became apparent that congregation-level initiatives could be divided into the following categories:¹

- Land Stewardship (or Resource Management): application of sustainable management practices to resources such as forests and farmland under control of the faith organization. In faith communities this Resource Management is defined as Stewardship.
- Conservation Practices/Behavior: resource conservation through energy efficiency, recycling, green building, and landscaping; renewable energy projects; fostering biodiversity through creation of wildlife habitat, invasive species removal projects; programs to promote engagement with nature, and development of community gardens for personal use and for donation to food pantries.
- Advocacy: participation in efforts to change policies at local, municipal, state, and national levels; social justice work at the community level

Although the initiatives within specific congregations usually included more than one category, congregations tended to have a primary emphasis that allowed for organization of case sites according to these categories.

In the process of reading these brief case studies, it became apparent that some faith communities were engaged in environmental activities on a scale that set them apart from most congregations. The majority of the stories described congregations that focused on one or two projects, however, a small portion of the congregations had undertaken multiple activities that integrated earth care into diverse areas of their religious organizations including worship, religious education, facilities management, and ministry work. In this subset of cases, earth care

¹ The National Religious Partnership for the Environment uses a ten-category typology of issues, which separates subjects such as Water, Land, Climate and Air, Fuel and Energy that are here subsumed under the single category of Conservation Practices. The simplified categorization developed here is organized around the type of *activity* undertaken to change a congregation's impact on the environment rather than being subdivided by the specific issue addressed by the activity.

seemed to have been incorporated into the religious missions of the faith communities. Cases like these, which were termed “exemplary” because they involved multiple activities and incorporated earth care into the community mission, became the focus of this research project with the goal of identifying factors that contributed to the process of integrating sustainability into a faith community’s social norms.

CASE SELECTION

The process of selecting cases for the study sample began with formulation of criteria for assessing whether potential faith-community study sites had undertaken sustainability initiatives that placed them in this subset of “exemplary” cases. Cases would be considered eligible for inclusion if they engaged in multiple activities and sustained those activities for at least four years. The four-year criterion was added in order to examine factors that contributed to durability of initiatives. The sample was also designed to include all three types of activity areas: land stewardship, conservation behavior, and policy advocacy.

Potential case study sites were identified through websites for organizations promoting or studying faith-based earth care and through recommendations from individuals with knowledge of faith-based sustainability activities. The same websites that provided the brief case studies that became the data set for analyzing types of faith-based environmental activities also served as the primary resource for locating cases for the research study sample. Using the names of the faith communities in the stewardship stories on these websites, it was possible to visit the websites for each congregation and examine whether earth care was presented as a prominent, on-going area of activity for the community. Combing through approximately 250 congregational webpages generated a list of thirty potential study sites that fit the criteria of multiple activities sustained over four or more years.

Criteria for evaluating potential case sites included:

- Scope: active engagement in consequential sustainability activities, which could include infrastructure improvements and behavior change that affected a faith community’s impact on the environment (not just an annual Earth Day liturgy or children’s education program)
 - Indicators:
 - Incorporation of sustainability into organization’s main webpage or existence of an entire section of web resources focused on environmental issues
 - Updated/current sustainability webpage
 - Designated “green team” or formal committee managing efforts

- Reputation of the congregation among leaders of regional faith-based sustainability organizations
 - Public commendation through media, state agencies such as Department of Natural Resources and national organizations such as the Environmental Protection Agency
- Durability: initiatives sustained at least 4 years
 - Specific practices/activities often changed over time but the congregations maintained continuous initiatives focused on environmental sustainability

Other considerations influencing case selection included region, accessibility, and prior research describing factors that affect environmental behavior. One source of funding for this project was a USDA McIntire-Stennis grant to examine faith-based forestry in Great Lakes states. Consequently, many of the faith communities studied are concentrated in the Great Lakes region, where case sites in which conservation behavior predominated were selected both for the quality of their environmental programs and their proximity to the five case-study sites that practiced sustainable forestry. Additional cases were selected for their potential to allow for examination of factors known to affect environmental behavior in non-religious contexts such as inclusion of cases in which initiatives emerged through both top-down and bottom-up processes. The sample also included four cases in which the congregations followed structured “green certification” programs that required them to complete particular types of activities in order to compare their initiatives with six initiatives that did not follow a structured program.

The list of selected sites includes five cases of Land Stewardship/Resource Management, six congregations engaged in Conservation Practices, and four examples of Advocacy (see Appendix 2 for a list of cases). There are, however, activities in each congregation that overlap into categories other than the one for which they were selected. The cases are concentrated in the Great Lakes and northeastern states, except for one in Virginia and one in California. This distribution derives from the location of exemplary cases that could be identified from the aforementioned organization web sites. The forestry cases are concentrated in the Great Lakes area due to the parameters of the research grant for the study of sustainable forestry in the Great Lakes region.

DATA COLLECTION

Three types of data were collected in order to examine the motivations and processes through which the fifteen faith communities in the research sample undertook sustainability initiatives:

1. Semi-structured interviews
2. Site visits and observation
3. Archival data

1. Semi-structured interviews with principals involved in sustainability initiatives at each site were conducted to provide information about the origins and processes shaping the congregation's activities. Appropriate interviewees were identified through contact information on web pages describing congregational sustainability projects, referrals from congregation office staff, and referrals from contacts in faith-based environmental interfaith organizations. The initial contacts in each location facilitated identification of additional people with knowledge of the sustainability activities, thereby creating a snowball sample for each case. Interviewees included pastors, administrative staff, maintenance staff, land managers, farm managers, and community garden participants, as well as leaders and members of "green teams" that organized the sustainability initiatives in their communities. Some of the interviewees belonged to organizations outside the congregations, such as the Maine Council of Churches and Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, which had assisted in development of initiative projects.

Interview questions were organized around five core research questions listed below, which were adapted as appropriate to the location and individual. Preliminary research into faith-based sustainability practices and background knowledge from the fields of social movement scholarship, conservation psychology, and collaborative process informed development of additional lists of questions that were used to probe for information about processes and resources during interviews. See Appendix 1 for a sample list of interview questions. The interviews were recorded in notebooks and transcribed into Word documents within twenty-four hours, to ensure accuracy.

2. Site visits ranging in length from one to three days allowed for assessment of the scope and impact of activities. During these visits, it was possible to evaluate the visibility of the initiative activities, the scale of the projects (size of gardens, number of solar panels, number of volunteers engaged in an activity, etc.), and some of the physical effects (e.g. restored prairie thriving

during a drought). Interviews conducted on-site also allowed for adaptation of questions to specific site conditions and gave participants the opportunity to demonstrate activities.

Observation of worship services provided information about internal community dynamics and observation of the neighborhood provided information about salient socio-economic and physical environmental conditions.

3. Archival data relevant to the history and implementation of the initiatives was collected at each site and through research online and in academic libraries. This data included scholarship on organizational polity, congregational histories, newsletters, meeting minutes, sermons, applications for green certification, media stories, brochures, and land management plans. Electronic media such as webpage videos and facebook pages were also included in the “archival” materials. These resources varied by congregation; some were available on websites and some only on-site.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data from the interviews, site observations, and archival materials for each site was combined into fifteen case studies structured around the five questions:

1. What motivates faith-based sustainability activity?
2. What is the process by which such initiatives emerge?
3. How are they organized and how do they function?
4. What appears to facilitate and sustain the efforts, and what challenges do they confront?
5. What outcomes are perceived to have been achieved by these initiatives?

These case studies ranged in length from 30 to 50 pages.

After the case studies were compiled, it was possible to begin cross-case analysis to identify factors shaping the emergence and implementation of faith-based sustainability initiatives. Once significant factors were identified in a few cases, all the other cases were checked to see if the same factors played a role in their initiatives. Through this iterative process, factors were organized into tables with columns for each case that could be used to determine how many cases shared specific factors and how those factors interacted with other factors that affected development of the initiatives. For example, interviewees cited various motivations that created incentives for their faith-based sustainability efforts. These motivations were organized into categories and the cases were compared to see whether individuals across the cases mentioned similar motivations. The similarities across the cases indicated that individuals shared

motivations related to a limited number of personal environmental and religious concerns while differences among their motivations seemed to reflect distinctions among congregational contexts. On occasion, it was necessary to consult the transcribed interviews for additional information about a case if factors that appeared significant in some cases were not evident in other case study summaries.

In the process of conducting this cross-case analysis, it became apparent that there was no single, simple story that explained how sustainability initiatives emerged and were implemented in these fifteen faith communities. Some initiatives grew out of a small project organized by a few community members that led to additional projects and gradually grew into a community-wide emphasis on earth care as an area of activity for the congregation. Others began with a community-wide decision to adopt earth care as a community ethic, followed by a process of developing an initiative that would put the new ethic into action. Despite the variations among the cases, some common patterns began to emerge from the data. In each case, the initiatives developed when key individuals took the lead and organized earth care activities through the venue of their faith community. The process of developing the initiatives was shaped by the characteristics of these individuals and their interactions with the faith leaders, congregation, and organization that made up the faith community.

These four domains of activity—Individuals, Faith Leaders, Congregation, and Organization—became the basis for a four-part analytical framework to organize and examine the case-study data. Consequently, the data was reorganized to explore factors in each domain that enabled or hindered emergence and implementation of the sustainability initiatives. This framework allowed for a deep analysis of the initiatives and revealed the importance of: individuals' motivations and leadership capabilities; faith leaders' role in legitimating sustainability as a faith issue; congregational engagement; and organizational structures for implementation of earth care initiatives.

The use of this four-part framework did, however, create a problem in terminology because the term “congregation” can be used to refer to the members of a faith community who gather together for worship or an entire religious organization. Earlier in this discussion of research methods, congregation was used in the second sense, to delineate the type of faith community studied in this research project. In order to avoid confusion, from this point forward the term congregation will only be used to in the first sense, to refer to the body of members in a

faith community, and the term “faith community” will be used to refer to the religious organization as a whole. Thus, each case study is an analysis of a faith community comprised of individuals, faith leaders, a congregation, and an organization.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

This study is the first to systematically explore sustainability initiatives undertaken by congregations in the United States and, consequently, it relies on a limited number of cases to develop theories that will need to be tested with additional research in the future. These limitations are evident in the sample and in one area of weakness in the data.

Given the small number of case studies, there are limitations due to selection bias that affect the generalizability of the study. The congregations that were studied are predominantly white and middle class and are concentrated in specific geographical areas. These socio-economic and regional limitations reflect biases related to the databases used to locate potential case sites as well as biases inherent in the case selection criteria. The databases through which the case sites were located probably privileged middle-class faith communities. Many of the stewardship stories on the websites for the Religious Partnership for the Environment and Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology were selected for inclusion in those venues because of media stories describing their environmental accomplishments. It is likely that affluent, white faith communities have greater access to media coverage. Similarly, case sites located through Interfaith Power and Light and GreenFaith websites involved congregations that had enrolled in programs offered by these interfaith environmental organizations; these programs may have greater appeal among middle-class white congregations.

The case selection criteria also created a bias toward middle-class, white congregations in the northern half of the United States. The preliminary research included attention to identification of a list of environmental stewardship stories for people-of-color congregations, low-income congregations, and congregations in southern states in order to create a diverse research sample. In spite of this effort, congregations on this list were excluded from the sample because their sustainability initiatives focused on a single activity or had not yet been in place for four years and, therefore, did not conform to the selection criteria for “exemplary” cases with multiple activities sustained over four or more years. The exclusion does not indicate that there are no exemplary faith-based sustainability initiatives among these communities, only that the

process for locating potential case sites did not provide adequate data to identify appropriate congregations in minority, low-income, and southern communities. These deficits will need to be addressed in subsequent research. Additional studies focused on case sites in the southeast are particularly desirable given that there may be regional differences in the dynamics of faith-based sustainability activities.

In addition to expansion of the sample, future research could address a weakness in the data collected for this study. Organizing the data into the four domains of the analytical framework revealed limitations in the materials available for examining the Congregation domain. The data collection process did not include surveys of the congregational members, which would have provided valuable information about how deeply sustainability became integrated into community social norms and whether faith-based sustainability initiatives affected people's behavior in their home or work environments.

Chapter 4

GENESIS AND EVOLUTION OF THE SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

An introduction to 15 case studies

INTRODUCTION

The fifteen case studies that provide the basis for this research share an overarching narrative: the sustainability initiatives emerged in response to specific triggering events and their development was shaped by the cultures, local geographic contexts, and resources of the faith communities. Within this common narrative, however, there is considerable variation. The triggers differed across cases: some began with one person's idea for a specific project or a small group that wanted to study connections between earth care and their faith tradition while others developed in response to a community-wide decision to adopt an earth care ethic. The resulting initiatives progressed along divergent trajectories as the faith communities moved toward integration of sustainability into their congregational social norms. This chapter introduces the fifteen faith communities, giving a brief summary of how their initiatives began, how they evolved over time, and what activities they have undertaken in their efforts to practice and promote more environmentally sustainable behavior. The following chapter analyzes notable similarities and differences observed across these cases, and constructs an analytical framework to be used for deeper exploration of factors that enabled the emergence and implementation of these sustainability initiatives.

OVERVIEW OF THE FAITH COMMUNITIES

The sustainability initiatives examined in this project were undertaken by fifteen faith communities from across the United States. Most of the communities are in the upper Midwest/Great Lakes and northeast regions, with the exception of two congregations in California and Virginia (see Map 1). Study of these faith communities provided valuable opportunities to examine factors that contribute to the development of consequential and durable

faith-based sustainability initiatives. As noted in the previous chapter describing the research methods, these case study sites were selected because the communities have implemented initiatives that include multiple activities and they have maintained these efforts for at least four years. In addition, site selection attempted to ensure inclusion of cases representing the various types of sustainability activities that are being undertaken by faith communities in the United States. During preliminary research for this project, an examination of the range of faith-based environmental actions in the United States revealed three categories of activity. First, and most prevalent, faith communities engage in *conservation practices* in which they change behavior and infrastructure in order to prevent pollution and conserve resources such as energy, water, and forests. Second, faith communities develop sustainable *land stewardship*, or resource management, systems for their lands in order to protect and restore ecosystems such as prairies, forests, and wetlands. Third, community members engage in *advocacy* efforts to influence local, regional, or national policies related to environmental sustainability. The three categories are not mutually exclusive and a community's focus may shift from one emphasis to another over time.

Map 1 Case Study Sites



The fifteen case study sites selected for inclusion in this research include communities that provide examples of all three types of activities. Conservation practices take center stage in the sustainability initiatives of ten urban/suburban non-monastic faith communities. Land stewardship practices are prominent in the sustainability initiatives of five monastic faith communities, which have extensive land holdings. Monastic communities are religious organizations in which men or women have chosen to make religion the full-time focus of their

lives as monks or nuns. Advocacy efforts appear in both non-monastic and monastic faith communities but are not ubiquitous in either group. The fifteen communities share several general characteristics: all have memberships that are predominantly white and middle-class, and all are well-established organizations, ranging in age from 39 to more than 150 years. With the exception of one evangelical church, they belong to “mainline” Protestant, Unitarian Universalist, Jewish, and Catholic denominations that have been historically associated with mainstream American society.¹ Differences in denomination did not affect case selection since the research sites were chosen for the quality of their environmental activities, however, the cross-case analysis does examine denomination as a variable affecting factors that enabled the faith communities to develop sustainability initiatives. The communities varied in size, from 40 individual members to 1800 families, and in physical context, from an urban congregation with a building, parking lot, and no green space to a rural abbey with 2800 acres of forest and its own zip code.

The descriptions of the fifteen cases in this chapter are divided into three clusters. Because the five monastic faith communities differ from the non-monastic cases in their emphasis on land stewardship, as well as organizational structure and size of infrastructure and land holdings, it made sense to analyze patterns in the genesis and evolution of their initiatives separately from those of the non-monastic faith communities. The ten non-monastic faith communities are subdivided into two groups: a cluster of six cases in which the sustainability initiatives evolved gradually in response to ideas and programmatic structures that developed *organically* from within the faith communities, and a separate cluster of four cases that enrolled in *green certification* programs managed by external organizations that provide applicants with a standardized framework for incorporating earth care into a religious organization. Because the certification programs affected the scope and structure of the faith communities’ sustainability initiatives, it was useful to describe the emergence and development of these four initiatives

¹ The prevalence of white, middle-class faith communities reflects a bias in the case selection processes. Potential sites were located through use of databases created by the National Council of Churches Eco-justice Ministry, the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, and Yale’s Forum on Religion and Ecology. Middle-class congregations dominate the Stewardship Stories in these databases. The selection criteria of “multiple activities and 4+ years duration” may also have increased the bias since lower income and people-of-color faith communities may be more likely to engage in environmental efforts focused on a single activity or of shorter duration.

separately in order to discern patterns among the green-certified initiatives and to compare and contrast them with the cases that developed their structures organically. Table 4.1 provides a list of faith community names, location, size, and most prominent activities.

The brief case summaries presented in this chapter introduce the faith communities and their sustainability initiatives, with special attention to notable features of each case. The summaries describe the events that triggered the initiatives and provide an overview of each case's development, including factors such as key individuals and activities that were particularly significant for the initiatives in specific faith communities. By comparing these case summaries, it is possible to identify themes that are shared across the cases and to discern distinctive features of initiatives that only become evident when they are juxtaposed with other cases. Identification of common themes and notable variations elucidates topics that require deeper exploration. Thus, this chapter addresses the following questions:

- How did these sustainability initiatives emerge?
 - What triggered them and why did the triggers lead to action?
- How did these initiatives evolve within the context of each faith community?
- What activities have been undertaken in each faith community's sustainability initiative?

Table 4.1 Overview of the Fifteen Cases

Case type	Faith Community	Location	Denomination	Size	Types of Activities
Organic structure	1. Trinity Presbyterian Church	Harrisonburg VA	Presbyterian Church (USA)	165	Environmental advocacy, Conservation practices
Organic structure	2. Madison Christian Community	Madison WI	ELCA and UCC (ecumenical)	400	Conservation practices, solar, Community gardens, Prairie restoration
Organic structure	3. Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation	Evanston IL	Reconstructionist Jewish	500 families	Green building, resource conservation
Organic structure	4. First Parish Church of Newbury	Newbury MA	United Church of Christ	40	Community gardens, nature-themed preschool
Organic structure	5. Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor	Ann Arbor MI	Evangelical	600	Conservation practices, community garden
Organic structure	6. St. Thomas Aquinas Parish	Palo Alto CA	Catholic	1800 families	Conservation practices, Advocacy
Green certified	7. First Universalist Church of Rockland	Rockland ME	Unitarian Universalist	159	CSA, Community Supported Fishery, Conservation practices
Green certified	8. Trinity Presbyterian Church	East Brunswick NJ	Presbyterian Church (USA)	425	Conservation practices, community garden
Green certified	9. Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple	New Brunswick NJ	Reform Jewish	550 families	Conservation practices, Environmental justice advocacy
Green certified	10. Temple Shalom	Aberdeen NJ	Reform Jewish	300 families	Conservation practices, solar, community garden
Monastic	11. Congregation of St. Joseph, Nazareth	Kalamazoo MI	Catholic Women	191 sisters	Land restoration, Conservation practices
Monastic	12. St. John's Abbey St. John's University	Collegeville MN	Catholic Benedictine Men	153 monks	Sustainable forestry, Conservation practices
Monastic	13. Villa Maria, Sisters of the Humility of Mary	Villa Maria PA	Catholic Women	158 sisters	Sustainable forestry, Organic gardening, CSA
Monastic	14. Holy Wisdom Monastery, Benedictine Women	Madison MI	Ecumenical Benedictine Women	3 sisters 350 laity	Prairie restoration, Green building
Monastic	15. Our Lady of Angels, Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia	Aston PA	Catholic Franciscan Women	450 sisters	Conservation practices, CSA, Environmental justice advocacy

CASE CLUSTER I: FAITH COMMUNITIES WITH ORGANIC INITIATIVES

The first six case studies describe sustainability initiatives that emerged and developed organically within their faith communities. These initiatives were inspired by a variety of triggering events. The case with the longest running initiative began slowly when a few church members with environmental interests formed a group for shared study and worship. After several years, threats to their local environment inspired them to increased levels of action, and they developed a sustainability initiative with diverse activities focused on advocacy and conservation practices. For the other five faith communities, sustainability initiatives emerged in response to more clearly defined triggering events. In two cases, the faith communities were at crossroads in which members had to make decisions about the future of their religious organizations and sustainability was adopted as a community focus during the decision process. For two communities, the triggering events came from the pastors, who presented ideas for environmental stewardship to their congregations. Finally, in one case, the triggering event came from an external organization, when the regional denominational organization instituted a new program to encourage sustainability efforts among member congregations.

1. Trinity Presbyterian Church (TPC²), Harrisonburg VA Membership: 165

In 1996, lay members of Trinity Presbyterian Church formed a Restoring Creation House Church, which was later renamed the Earth Care House Church. House churches are small groups through which members engage in ministry work as a way to express the church's mission of "striving to be the church in the world through servant ministries." Any member of the congregation who perceives a need for ministry in relation to a particular topic, such as food security or poverty alleviation, may propose formation of a house church. If other members share interest in the topic, the group creates a formal covenant describing the mission of the house church and the activities through which the group will fulfill its mission. The Earth Care House Church mission is "to promote Church and community awareness and involvement in restoring creation." It fulfills this mission through group study of theology and environmental texts, leading the Earth Day Sunday service, and organizing outdoor activities for youth.

² The name of each case study site is followed by an abbreviation that will be used in data tables. Thus, TPC designates Trinity Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg.

Along with these study and worship activities, the Earth Care House Church promotes involvement in restoring creation through community outreach and practical actions, areas of activity that have evolved over the years. In early years, the group studied theology and did outreach by staying informed of environmental issues, writing letters to newspaper editors and legislators, and attending public meetings. After a few years, however, the group began to feel the need for increased action, especially since many of the house church participants were long-time environmentalists who were well informed about issues of pollution, biodiversity loss, and climate change.

Faith soon motivated the Earth Care House Church to a new level of environmental action when they found that a beloved natural area was being damaged by pollution. As outdoor enthusiasts, members of the house church often visited Shenandoah National Park. In 2001, they became aware the park suffered from air quality problems, especially acid rain. The problem could not be addressed locally since the pollution came from coal-burning power plants in West Virginia; only federal legislation could affect interstate pollution. According to Lynn Cameron, a founding member of the group, the scope of the problem intimidated them because “what could a little house church do about such a big issue?” However, Rev. Ann Held suggested that the Earth Care House Church might be able to gain support for addressing the issue of coal pollution if they presented a resolution to the annual General Assembly meeting of the Presbyterian Church (USA) denomination. Telling each other that, “God does not call us to do little things,” the members of the house church decided they had to try to protect their beloved park. They worked with the Southern Environmental Law Center to craft a resolution that called for the Presbyterian Church (USA) to educate Presbyterians about the environmental and health consequences of coal-fired power plants. It also asked all Presbyterians to exercise stewardship of the earth by urging government officials to support policies and legislation that would: enforce existing clean air laws, enact new laws for power plants to reduce pollution; and end “grandfather” loopholes that exempt older coal-fired plants from current regulations. Furthermore, the resolution directed that the new policy should be communicated to the power companies and that these concerns about air quality should be incorporated into the advocacy work of the Washington Office and Environmental Justice Office of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The resolution was unanimously approved by the 214th General Assembly in 2002.

Buoyed by their success, which Cameron said left them feeling that “there was no stopping us now,” the members of the Earth Care House Church continued to strive to do advocacy work while also expanding their range of activities by undertaking resource conservation projects at the church. The combination of faith and environmental work has contributed to the durability of the house church; it helps the members cultivate hope despite the scope of environmental crises. Lynn Cameron, a founder of the Earth Care House Church notes that environmental work often starts with being against something, but says, “Eventually, you have to ask, ‘What are you *for*?’” Study of eco-theological reports published by the Presbyterian Church, such as *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice* (1990) and *Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development* (1996), set the stage for the house church members to posit their faith-based response to environmental problems in terms of achieving positive goals of an environmental restoration, justice, and sustainability rather than simply avoiding a negative scenario.

These theological studies also laid the foundations for a robust initiative. After a few years of study, members of the Earth Care House Church began to feel the need to do something more active. According to Cameron, “Once the theology was within us, we could act out our faith. We could be against waste of resources” and begin to organize a more diverse range of activities. They had begun with a strong emphasis on traditional environmental advocacy work, writing letters to legislators and speaking at public meetings. In addition, they worked to educate the wider community about subjects like air pollution and threats to local water supplies from hydrofracking by sponsoring Town Hall meetings and giving presentations at churches, universities, wineries, and other facilities. While continuing their advocacy work, they have gradually added projects to conserve resources at the church by weatherizing the building, upgrading lighting, and replacing disposables with reusable dishes. They also have grown vegetables in home and church gardens to contribute to food pantries and donated rain barrels to families with young children. Throughout almost two decades of working to restore creation, the house church has maintained a particular emphasis on working to connect youth with nature. Along with regular outings for children from the church, members of the Earth Care House Church have used grant funds to organize environmental education summer programs for children from urban areas and have donated trees to a local camp.

The accomplishments and durability of the Earth Care House Church have been bolstered by strong support from their faith community. Rev. Ann Held is a strong proponent of environmental protection. Moreover, she enjoys outdoor activities and often incorporates reflections from her experiences of nature into her sermons. The house church structure, with its public covenant statements, ensures that the wider faith community is regularly apprised of the Earth Care group's mission and activities, and formally endorses earth care as an authorized expression of the church's mission. Due to this authorization process, the Earth Care House Church is able to publicly advocate for environmental protection as a moral issue, confident that their faith community stands behind them and will support their actions. Finally, the members of the Earth Care House Church gain strength from their religious convictions. Their early years of theological study built a firm foundation from which to undertake their sustainability activities. When people have challenged them, saying that Christians should not be so focused on this-worldly concerns, members of the Earth Care House Church are able to explain with confidence why they feel that their faith requires them to restore God's creation.

2. Madison Christian Community (MCC), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and United Church of Christ, Middleton WI ; Membership: approx. 400

One gusty day in 2001, Rev. Jeff Wild, the new Lutheran pastor at the Madison Christian Community, found himself thinking that the church grounds would be a good location for a wind turbine. He mentioned the idea to members of the community and they formed a task force to explore the idea. They learned that a wind turbine would not be practical but that their roof was perfect for solar panels; with grant assistance, the church installed a photovoltaic array. The solar panels were the first of many projects for a faith community that has come to see stewardship of the natural environment as part of its core mission. The ecumenical community of about 400 members, in which a Lutheran congregation and a United Church or Christ congregation have shared a building and six acres of land since 1970, describes its purpose as "living faithfully and lovingly with God, neighbors, and creation." All the elements of this purpose statement come together in the community's environmental ministry, which includes energy conservation, extensive community gardens, and two acres of restored prairies.

The prairies are indicative of a long-term environmental ethic that was already present in the faith community when Pastor Wild arrived. The church was built on land donated by a

farmer and the community had long felt a responsibility to care for this “gift of land,” which they attributed to divine grace. When soil was excavated to create space for an addition to the building, rather than having the dirt removed, it was piled along the front edge of the parking area to form a berm. Members gathered native prairie seeds from roadsides and rural prairie patches and created a prairie on the berm. Pleased with the outcome, members worked to convert another acre of land on the side of the church into prairie. The community members have tended to these prairies since 1983, even conducting controlled burns in the spring to stimulate native plant growth and control invasive species.

In addition to this prairie restoration project, the community had a tradition of sending youth on a summer canoe trip to the Boundary Waters of Minnesota so, with these traditions as background, there was already an unstated environmental ethic within the community. Pastor Wild says, “[I]t was just a matter for me to become aware of it and build on it.” The minister integrated environmental stewardship into religious teachings and connected those teachings to the land-heritage of the community. Members of the community who shared the pastor’s environmental concerns joined the Energy Task Force to research renewable energy options and developed recommendations for reducing energy use in church facilities.

Community members take pride in their successful efforts to reduce resource use in the buildings, but the environmental stewardship activities that are closest to their hearts and most express their vision of how to live “faithfully and lovingly with God, neighbors, and creation” take place on the six acres of land around their church. Along with the two acres of prairie, the community maintains extensive produce gardens, which include a hoop house for starting seedlings in the spring, a small orchard, and a chicken coop. The community garden, in which people lease plots annually, was established in the 1970s. In 2004, Pastor Wild helped plant a Children’s Garden, which serves as the location for a cooperative project between the Madison Christian Community and the Lussier Community Education Center. During the summer, children from the low-income Wexford Ridge Neighborhood come to the church twice a week to learn about gardening. Working closely with adults, they learn how to care for plants and chickens and how to prepare healthy foods from fresh produce. The children also take a bag of food home to their families each week. The garden also connects to prison ministry work. The heirloom plants in the garden come from a prison horticultural program and a group of prisoners

comes to the church in the spring to prepare the garden beds, see where their seedlings will be planted, and partake of a lunch prepared for them by the faith community.

Pastor Wild describes the integration of environmental stewardship with faith at the Madison Christian Community as “ministry of place.” Community members who tend the restored prairies, work in the gardens, walk the outdoor labyrinth, serve on environmental task forces and participate in activities like building rainwater harvest systems are building connections to the place where they invest their effort. In the process, both faith and environmental perspective are affected. People build relationships, both within the two congregations and the neighborhood, that strengthen their sense of community. They also gain a sense of efficacy as they put their faith into action. Moreover, Wild says they have become better Trinitarians, not only focused on Jesus and salvation, but also on God as Father/Creator of the natural world and the presence of the Holy Spirit within the environment all around them. Thus, through the ministry of place at Madison Christian Community, environmental stewardship and faith have both been enhanced.

*3. Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation (JRC), E49vanston IL
Membership: approx. 500 families; 875 adults*

The Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation in Evanston is known as “The Green Synagogue.” The sustainability initiative that earned them this title emerged during a period of reflection, in which the necessity of dealing with a building that was no longer adequate for their needs inspired the faith community to think about current programs and future goals. In 2002, members of the congregation had formed an Environmental Task Force to explore connections between Judaism and environmental issues. When they learned that the Building Committee was going to recommend that the community tear down and replace its old building, the Task Force members decided to propose that the congregation follow green building practices. They presented a proposal to the board. As Rabbi Rosen and the board studied the issue, the rabbi became quite excited about green building as an opportunity to express religious values and he began to incorporate environmental themes into the opening prayers for the board meetings. Despite some concerns about how the congregation would react to the additional costs, the board decided to present the proposal to the community. As the congregation learned more about green building, enthusiasm among the members increased.

The more people we told about this, the more excited they became, and more people became invested in the overall project in a way they wouldn't have been ordinarily. Once this project became about more than bricks and mortar, when it became about our values—not just that we're building a building, but how we're building it—people became invested in it. (Rosen, quoted in Yearwood: 4)

Community members expressed their enthusiasm by contributing funds and skills, resulting in construction of the first platinum LEED-certified synagogue in the United States.

Deciding to build a new building and that it should be a green building was a community-wide decision. Full congregational participation is necessary in infrastructure decisions, for which the community provides financial resources. The proposal to follow green building practices created an opportunity for the entire community to study connections between sustainability and their religious values. All who contributed funds to the new building shared ownership in the green synagogue and the integration of sustainability with their community identity was strengthened as the building drew media attention and public acclaim. Members are reminded of their community commitment to sustainability every time they visit their synagogue, where green features are beautifully apparent in natural lighting, woodwork, and windows framing restful views of foliage. Furthermore, the community uses its building as a vehicle for ministry. The congregation's website provides detailed information about the construction project, explaining the choices that were made and the benefits of various design elements, and members of the congregation have trained to serve as docents, leading tours of the building so that others may learn about the benefits of green building.

*4. First Parish Church of Newbury (FPN), United Church of Christ, Newbury MA
Membership: approx. 40*

The Sustainability Initiative of First Parish Church of Newbury emerged from a community discernment process in 2006. The faith community had shrunk to about thirty members who struggled to maintain their 375-year old building. The minister decided the community needed to consider its future and twenty-five members met weekly for a year to reflect on their personal desires, research community demographics, listen to each other, and pray for guidance. A new community mission emerged from this process: their congregation would be Stewards of Earth and Spirit.

Uncertain of how to implement their new mission, members decided to start an organic garden behind the church. Unfortunately, the gardeners were inexperienced, the soil was stony

and, after the plants went untended through the summer, the garden failed to produce. Rather than give up, however, the congregation took the lesson to heart and set out to learn how to do things better. Two people, in particular, led the way. Erin Stack, a deacon of the church with an interest in gardening, took over management of the garden project, and the minister enrolled in training to improve her leadership skills so that she could better guide her congregation. Stack reached out to the wider community and found resources to learn about both gardening and community building. The church became a pick-up location for a local Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) venture, and the CSA farmers also started using some of the church property for garden space. The congregation also joined a newly formed Greater Newburyport Eco-collaborative that brought together organizations and businesses to share ideas about how to foster environmental action in their area; there the church members were able to connect with the community and find people who shared their interest in starting a garden. The garden was restarted on a larger scale, with participants from the church and the wider community who would be present throughout the growing season. In order to facilitate gardening success, the church brought in experts to provide instruction to their fledgling gardeners. The gardens grew into a ministry called the New Eden Collaborative, which includes community gardens, eco-art projects, an environmental education program, and monthly garden parties. Knowing from their own experiences that people with an interest in gardening may need help getting started, New Eden offers organic gardening and organic cooking classes to the community.

Alongside their garden project, the faith community developed additional activities through which to connect the two parts of their mission to be Stewards of Earth and Spirit. They started holding some Sunday services outdoors, in a tree-shaded circle of benches dubbed the “Chapel Under the Trees.” Environmental awareness was incorporated into Sunday school programs for children, the youth group periodically hosts environmental speakers, and adults attend classes on topics such as simple living, local eating, and food preservation. Seeing a need in the wider community, the church members decided to invest in creation of a nature-based secular preschool, utilizing the church’s building and grounds. The result is Our Secret Garden, a nursery and preschool that teaches children to “care for themselves, each other, and the earth” through a curriculum that emphasizes hands-on experiences of nature.

In the process of figuring out how to implement its mission to be Stewards of Earth and Spirit, First Parish Church became more active in the wider community. The church has formed

partnerships with people who can teach about gardening, organizes annual community clean-ups before Earth Day, and participates in the Yankee Homecoming Parade. The transformation of the church's back yard, from rocks and weeds to a thriving community garden, mirrors the transformation of the faith community from a remnant congregation just barely hanging on to a congregation actively engaged in pursuing a mission that brings them into beneficial relationship with the people around them.

*5. Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor (VAA), Ann Arbor MI
Membership: approx. 600*

In 2007, Rev. Ken Wilson participated in a retreat that brought together scientists and evangelical ministers to discuss climate change. Wilson had not previously engaged in environmental activity because he was more focused on dealing with other issues, but he had a deep interest in science-based knowledge. During the retreat, he felt great concern as he listened to the scientists describe the predicted impacts of climate change, but what most caught his attention was Dr. Gus Speth's comment that the real environmental crisis had more to do with greed, pride, and apathy than pollution and climate change. Therefore, Speth said that what was needed was a cultural transformation, something scientists did not know how to achieve and for which they needed help from religious leaders.

Inspired by Speth's words, Wilson returned to his Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor and preached a series of three sermons on Creation Care, explaining why Christians have a responsibility to care for God's creation and why current human behavior is environmentally unsustainable. Afterwards, a congregant named Phil Brabbs asked the pastor what he could do to take action in response to the homiletic message. Wilson suggested he start a small group. Green Vineyard was formed with dual purposes of studying the scriptural basis for environmental behavior and leading efforts to make the church "greener." With support from the pastor, the church board implemented policies to incorporate environmental benefits into decision processes. The church also adopted resource conservation practices such as: reducing energy use through more efficient light bulbs, reducing hours of building and parking lot lighting, and adding roof insulation; reducing paper consumption by switching to electronic bulletins and changing office behavior; organizing participation in projects to improve local natural areas such

as removal of invasive species and tree planting; and promoting use of reusable shopping bags and CFLs in member homes.

Despite these early successes, Green Vineyard faced challenges. Rev. Wilson was pleased to see that Green Vineyard drew college-aged members to the church, however many of the students moved away after graduating and were not replaced. The group was predominantly comprised of a shrinking circle of close friends and, when Brabbs had to give up leadership in order to deal with personal health problems, the group faded away. In spite of this loss of leadership and members, Green Vineyard continued because of a second project that had emerged.

In 2008, a county food bank began a Faith and Food program, in which they offered to help local congregations start community gardens if they would donate half the produce to feed the poor. Gretchen Marshall-Toth Fejel, a member of the Vineyard Church with a personal interest in organic gardening but little practical experience, attended a presentation about the program and offered to start a garden at the church. Other members who were long-time gardeners assisted with initial creation of the garden. Unlike the original Green Vineyard, which was perceived as a small group activity for a few environmental enthusiasts, the Community Garden Ministry has gradually evolved into an expression of the congregation's Compassion and Justice ministry work.

6. St. Thomas Aquinas Parish (STA), Palo Alto CA
Membership: approx. 1800 families

In 2009, the Diocese of San Jose, on the southwest shores of San Francisco Bay, launched a Catholic Green Initiative, encouraging all parishes within the Santa Clara Valley to adopt environmentally sustainable practices in order to mitigate the effects of climate change. Leaders of the Catholic Church, from Popes John Paul II, Benedict, and Francis to the US Council of Bishops, have proclaimed that the Church's social justice teachings require Catholics to respond to climate change as a moral issue because it will disproportionately affect the poor. The bishop of the Diocese of San Jose inaugurated the Catholic Green Initiative in response to a request from the local Council of Priests, who felt that they needed a way to deal with climate change issues in their parishes. Despite the proposed diocesan scope of the initiative, only a

handful of parishes have formed Green Committees and begun to implement sustainability initiatives. Among the first to take action was St. Thomas Aquinas Parish.

St. Thomas Aquinas Parish is a complex faith community formed in 1985 by the consolidation of five smaller parishes into one administrative organization that currently has three churches (St Thomas Aquinas Church, Our Lady of the Rosary Church, and St. Alfred the Great Church), as well as a school and a separate administrative complex. The parish is managed by a senior pastor, two associate pastors, a deacon, and hard-working staff. In spite of three decades of unification into one parish, the churches retain distinct identities because they are in different neighborhoods and have unique cultures rooted in their separate histories and local membership demographics. Some of the congregations are predominantly middle and upper middle-class professionals while others are dominated by less affluent Hispanic communities.

The impetus for organizing a Green Committee at St. Thomas Aquinas came from Gerard McGuire. McGuire was passionate about both his Catholic faith and the need for Christians to respond to climate change. As a youth, he had studied for the priesthood and, in recent years, he trained to do public outreach on climate change issues through Al Gore's Climate Project. McGuire was part of the diocesan committee that planned the Catholic Green Initiative. He then pulled together a Green Committee in his home parish of St. Thomas Aquinas by reaching out to people he already knew had environmental concerns. Most of the people who joined him were members of the Human Concerns Committee, the volunteer group dedicated to alleviating social problems such as hunger and homelessness. Like McGuire, the committee members combine strong Catholic faith with deep concerns about climate change and the world their descendents will inherit. The senior pastor left management of the Green Committee in the hands of its lay members, but assigned Chuck Tully, the head of the parish's Facilities staff (and, later, parish Business Manager), to serve on the committee. Thus, the Green Committee became a subcommittee of the Facilities Committee.

Although the Green Committee had neither administrative authority nor budget of its own, it could research issues and bring recommendations to the Facilities Committee. This partnership with Facilities worked particularly well for implementing energy conservation projects, which were a central focus for the Green Committee due to its emergence from concerns about climate change. The parish succeeded in reducing its energy consumption through a combination of technological improvements and behavior change. One example of a

technological improvement that exemplifies the cooperation between the Green Committee and the Facilities Committee is the replacement of a kitchen stove at Our Lady of the Rosary Church. Some of the women mentioned that the church had a stove with a pilot light that burned 24/7, which made the kitchen very warm even when the stove was not in use. The Green Committee raised the possibility of replacing the stove with the Facilities Committee, then did research to identify a stove with an electric ignition that would meet the church's needs and fit the budget Facilities had allotted for the project. The new stove, purchased by Tully based on their recommendation, saves money and energy both by reducing gas consumption when the stove is not in use and by reducing the need for air conditioning to mitigate the heat in the kitchen area. Having Tully as liaison between the parish administration and the committee has been important for implementation of the Green Committee's energy conservation goals. He has not only authorized purchase of new appliances, he has actively located grants and funds from governmental organizations to offset the costs of the upgrades, thereby making it possible to save energy without exceeding the annual Facilities budget. With these supplemental funds, he was able to upgrade the lighting to more efficient bulbs and replace the boilers with smaller, more efficient models.

Technological improvements can be a budgetary challenge for a parish with aging infrastructure and extensive charitable needs among its membership, but once the changes are in place, they mostly function automatically. On the other hand, behavior change, the second element in the Green Committee's campaign to conserve energy, can be slow to take hold and may require continuous renewal. Despite these challenges, St. Thomas Aquinas Parish reduced its energy use by twenty-five percent, an accomplishment that required participation from the wider congregation. The majority of this reduction came from two changes. First, the staff in the churches, schools, and administrative buildings adopted energy conservation practices such as turning off computers, printers, and copiers overnight and reducing hours of lighting inside and outside of buildings. Second, the Green Committee organized a campaign to encourage people to keep the doors of the churches closed, thereby preventing egress of heat in the winter and cool air in the summer. There is a tendency to prop church doors open, especially at the beginning and end of Sunday services, when large numbers of people are entering and exiting. In order to save energy by keeping the doors closed, the community members had to be retrained to consider energy conservation and set aside old habits. The Committee wrote bulletin articles, posted signs

by the doors, and worked with their faith community to gradually establish new habits at all three churches.

Having multiple buildings and diverse sub-cultures presents challenges for implementing a sustainability initiative, but the Green Committee has also identified some benefits from their complex context. The committee members lay out a plan for the activities they will undertake each year, and they sometimes decide to begin a project in one church first, where they think implementation may be easier, in order to learn whether their strategies are going to be effective. Then they can use their experiences in one church to adapt their project for the next location. Along with their successes in energy conservation, they have organized environmental education events, implemented recycling practices at the parish buildings, used recycling games and bottled-versus-tap water taste tests at the parish picnic to encourage people to change behavior at home, instituted bike-to-church days, and established a policy for replacing any trees that are removed from parish grounds.

CASE CLUSTER II: GREEN CERTIFIED FAITH COMMUNITIES

Unlike the preceding six cases, in which the sustainability initiatives developed organically and gradually in response to individual and organizational factors, the initiatives in the next four faith communities adhered to programmatic structures prescribed by green certification processes. One faith community in this cluster is a Unitarian Universalist church in Maine that scaled up its environmental efforts by joining the Green Sanctuary Program managed by the Unitarian Universalist Association. The Green Sanctuary Program provides guidance and a structural format for faith communities seeking to develop and implement sustainability initiatives. This case cluster also includes two Reform Jewish temples and a Presbyterian Church in New Jersey. This trio of faith communities, all in the New Brunswick region, had ready access to the resources of GreenFaith, an interfaith organization dedicated to promoting environmental efforts through outreach to people of faith. GreenFaith runs a green certification program that provides guidance and a general structure for integrating sustainability into religious organizations. Including these four cases in the research sample offers opportunities for examining whether initiatives developed through certification programs differ from those that emerge organically within a faith community.

*7. First Universalist Church of Rockland (UR) Rockland ME
Membership approx. 159*

The sustainability initiative at the First Universalist Church of Rockland dates its origins to 2003, when Ann D. (Andy) Burt of the Maine Council of Churches asked if the congregation would join a campaign to encourage Maine legislators to support US participation in the Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Members of the church formed an Earth Care Team to coordinate their efforts, which soon expanded to include selling CFL light bulbs to community members and participation in a state-wide “Be a Good Apple” program through which people would pledge to purchase ten percent of their monthly groceries from Maine food producers. After a couple years, the Earth Care Team felt the need to scale up their efforts and decided to seek Green Sanctuary Certification for their church.

Green Sanctuary is a program developed by the Unitarian Universalist Association, the denominational umbrella organization for Unitarian and Universalist congregations, to encourage member congregations to incorporate sustainability into their faith organizations. To be certified as a Green Sanctuary, a congregation must complete twelve projects in four action areas: Worship and Celebration, Religious Education, Environmental Justice, and Sustainable Living. Enrolling in the certification program meant that earth care could not simply be the work of a small, committed group; the whole faith community would have to contribute to the process. The Earth Care Team presented the idea to the congregation and received a vote of approval to begin the application process.

The activities undertaken to fulfill the certification requirements emerged from the local community context and the interests of the congregation members. Pastoral and religious education staff contributed support through environmentally themed sermons and classes, which helped motivate participation in the larger projects organized by the Green Sanctuary Committee (formerly the Earth Care Team). Two particular project areas have proven transformative for the church and its wider community: local food and energy conservation.

The Green Sanctuary Committee decided to focus on local food as an action area after organizing a meeting to ask about topics that interested the congregation members; more people indicated an interest in food than any other issue. Serendipitously, shortly after that meeting, Andy Burt contacted them to ask if the congregation would be interested in providing support to a young couple who wished to start a Community Supported Agriculture venture (CSA). The church agreed. The CSA started small, with fifteen shareholders prepaying for produce and the

farmers using that money for their start-up costs. The farm was a success and subscriptions increased from 45 in the second year to 120 in the third year and finally were capped at 200. The farm project became the basis for a motif in the church's sustainability initiatives: the team recognized that a project that started small could grow after community members saw proof of its value.

Building on the success of the CSA, members of the Green Sanctuary Committee wondered if it might be possible to add fish to their local food project. After all, Rockland had once been the heart of the midcoast Maine fishing industry and, even though the processing facilities were long gone, fishermen still worked in neighboring coastal towns. The church invited representatives of a local fishing community to speak to their church about current industry conditions and were distressed to learn that the ground fishermen, who fished close to shore with small boats, were struggling to survive due to competition from large fishing enterprises, consolidation of markets and processing in distant locations, and declining fish stocks. Rather than incorporate fish into the existing CSA, the fishermen conceived the idea to experiment with a Community Supported Fishery (CSF). The church told the fishermen they thought the idea would work but that based on their past experience, it would probably start small and then grow. The church and the fishermen decided to "take a leap of faith" and give it a try for the upcoming winter shrimp season. The church marketed the CSF to its members and rounded up subscribers to buy shrimp directly from the fishermen who promised them a fresher product than would be available in stores at a price that was lower for the consumer, yet higher than the fishermen would have received if they had taken the shrimp to the regular market auction. During its first year, the CSF was more symbolically than financially successful, providing enough support for one fisherman to pay his fuel bills each week. However it also created local awareness about the opportunity for the community to support their local fishermen and interest in the idea expanded beyond the church. The CSF grew to include fish during the summer and, by the second year, there were multiple drop-off sites at community markets as well as direct sales to local restaurants.

The local food projects gave congregation members a sense of efficacy; they realized that their actions could affect conditions in their local community. However, for a few members like Frank Mundo, the food projects seemed inadequate to address the environmental concern that weighed most heavily on them, the problem of how to mitigate climate change. Mundo finally

found a project through which he could take action when an energy audit revealed that the church was losing heat through its basement windows. Mundo and Dick Cadwegan, another church member, built storm window inserts for the basement windows and church energy use immediately declined. Congregation members then asked if it would be possible to build storm window inserts for their homes, which soon led to a new sustainability project. Mundo and Cadwegan formed WindowDressers, a non-profit that works with churches to provide low-cost window inserts to people in Maine communities. As with the CSA and CSF, the project started small and grew, rippling outward from the church to the wider community and beyond.

*8. Trinity Presbyterian Church (TNJ), East Brunswick NJ
Membership approx. 425*

At Trinity Presbyterian Church in East Brunswick, a community mission discernment process inspired the community to adopt stewardship of earth as an area of church ministry. In 2007, the community had a new pastor who was open to innovative ideas about areas of ministry and he encouraged church members to begin a period of study to decide what their church's mission should be going forward. That year, the Presbyterian Church (USA) denomination was recommending consideration of hunger, peacemaking, and environment as areas of church mission. Initially, nobody at Trinity was interested in environment as a mission; everyone wanted to feed the hungry, a long-standing focus of ministry efforts, and no one considered the environment to be a faith issue. However, a committee spent three months studying the trio of issues, exploring how many people were affected by each and what actions could be taken to mitigate them. In the process, the committee members realized that all of the other issues started with the environment and that people needed to learn about toxic waste, food contamination, and how to grow their own food in order to address issues of hunger and conflict. At the end of their study process, the committee voted unanimously to adopt stewardship of creation as a mission focus for their church.

Debbie O'Halloran, who had led the study process, became co-chair of a new Trinity Earth Shepherds group working to integrate stewardship of creation into the faith community. The Earth Shepherds organized some activities such as educational events to teach community members how to recycle and collecting sneakers for recycling through a Nike program, however, they soon decided that their committee was not knowledgeable enough about environmental issues to effectively educate the congregation. They sought help from GreenFaith, a New Jersey

non-profit organization dedicated to helping people of faith take a leadership role in developing a more environmentally sustainable world. Trinity enrolled in the GreenFaith Certification Program, which provides a framework and support to help congregations “integrate environmental themes into their worship, religious education, facility maintenance, and social outreach” (TES webpage). After three years of work, they became the first congregation in the United States to be certified as a GreenFaith Sanctuary and, in 2010, they were also certified as an Earth Care Congregation through a new program developed by the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Because Trinity’s earth care initiative emerged from a community mission discernment process, from its inception the congregation regarded it as an aspect of their church’s mission, not a separate project for a core group of environmentalists. Once they enrolled in the GreenFaith program, they were able to implement their new mission by its structure and ideas to integrate earth care into the venue of their religious organization. The first step was to create an environmental mission statement to explain how earth care fit into the community mission. Their statement expressed the faith foundation that motivated their work and the types of activities that a faith community could contribute to efforts to address environmental issues: “We, as a family of faith, believe that it is the responsibility of all to Care for God’s Creation through environmental education, conservation and community outreach.”

Environmental education became a core area of activity for the church. They started with member education about ways to care for the earth through programs on topics such as pollution, environmental justice, and hydro-fracking. Because GreenFaith required congregations to conduct an environmental justice project, they organized a tour of the Ironbound District, a low-income area of New Jersey with extensive pollution from its long manufacturing history. Trinity members were shocked to discover that there were areas of such poverty and pollution just a few miles from their church. They also learned that the Ironbound residents were looking for partners who would help them lobby for enforcement of regulations and cleanup of contamination, not “saviors” who would rescue them. In addition to adult education, the church arranged to sponsor a faith-based preschool program that would incorporate earth care into its curriculum. The Little Earth Shepherds preschool made use of church classroom space as well as its new community gardens.

The gardens emerged in response to the interests and concerns of several church members. The GreenFaith Program requires that communities undertake activities to “green” their operations and provides a list of possible action ideas to help communities find options that best suit them. These lists helped Trinity office staff and committee members adopt practices to reduce paper use, increase recycling, and conserve water and electricity. They also applied the ideas to community events by switching to reusable dishes, which volunteers washed by hand, and hosting vegetarian church suppers. But some of the biggest projects took place out on the grounds. One church member was concerned about the increasing endangerment of butterflies in North America so, in 2010, he and his family created a 12,500 square-foot butterfly garden in the wide grassy area beyond the church parking lot. Then a young church member got the idea to create a community garden as his Eagle Scout project. In 2011, he built thirty-eight 10x10 foot beds and a surrounding fence in the open area between the church and the new butterfly garden. Church members signed up for plots in which to grow food and families with surplus produce shared it with other community members. Some people also grew flowers, which were used to decorate the church. These gardens were especially popular with young families who would bring their children down to the garden after Sunday services.

The new outdoor projects changed the look of the church grounds and served as a visible witness to the congregation’s mission to be stewards of the earth. According to Rev. Rob Carter, the community takes its earth care mission seriously. They did not adopt earth care on a whim; they went through an extensive study process, decided that earth care was important to them as people of faith, and “covenanted to Care for Creation.” Adopting earth care through a covenant, a formal obligation to God, made it a core part of their community’s religious mission. As a result, the pastor says that it affects the management of the church and its ministries:

[O]ur church family feels a personal responsibility to Care for God’s Creation. Everything that is done in the church, is done through an environmental lens – meaning, what is best for God’s Creation, is always a consideration in our decision-making.

9. Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple (AET), New Brunswick NJ
Membership: approx. 550 families

Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple is one of the oldest Reform Jewish faith communities in the New Jersey. In the 1960s, as most of the members moved south to suburbs, the community made a conscious decision to remain in their historic Moorish-style building. By the 21st

century, fewer than 20 of the approximately 550 member families resided in New Brunswick, yet this commuter temple remains a vibrant, multigenerational faith community.

In 2010, the Union of Reformed Judaism in New Jersey, a regional organization for Reform Jewish congregations, formed a partnership with GreenFaith, a New Jersey-based interfaith organization dedicated to promoting environmental sustainability in faith communities. The Union of Reformed Judaism offered to provide grants to offset application costs for Reform Temples that enrolled in the GreenFaith certification program to “green” their faith communities. The senior rabbi at Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple brought up the opportunity with the board of his temple, which included an environmental educator named Michael (Mike) Chodroff. The board supported the idea and Chodroff agreed to chair a Green Team and guide the temple through the green certification process.

GreenFaith certification requires congregations to undertake actions in areas of Spirit (worship and education), Justice (education and advocacy), and Stewardship (conservation behavior related to energy, transportation, food, water, waste, toxics, and grounds maintenance). Enthusiastic support from clergy and members of all the committees that manage the programs and operations of the temple facilitated implementation of greening efforts at Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple. The associate rabbi took the lead on worship elements, beginning with a sermon about the GreenFaith program on Rosh Hashanah, one of the high holy days in the Jewish calendar during which the entire community is present at the temple. Green Team members from Building and Grounds committees and administrative staff helped integrate sustainability into temple operations by: instituting use of non-toxic cleaning supplies; exploring the potential for installation of solar panels; changing purchasing policies to emphasize paper products with recycled content; replacing numerous mailings with electronic texts; and increasing efforts to recycle.

Anshe Emeth has particularly strong educational programs for both children and adults, both of which became venues for greening the temple. Chodroff created a high school elective on Jews and Ecology that taught temple students about the intersection of Judaism and ecology through time in order to “explore our responsibilities as Jews in the 21st century.” As part of the course, which took place during fall of 2010, the students were encouraged to apply what they were learning by developing projects to green the community and the religious school. One project they initiated was a carpool program for students attending religious school classes. In

addition to the high school course, the Director of Religious Education, who was also on the Green Team, added environmental themes to the educational programming for younger children. Finally, Chodroff gave four presentations for adults under the auspices of the temple's tradition of Monday night Kollel, or Jewish learning.

As the adult education environmental Kollel series illustrates, the Green Team at Anshe Emeth was able to incorporate environmental elements into regular temple activities. Each December, the temple organizes a Mitzvah Day, an annual day of volunteer service for congregation members of all ages. The Green Team organized a Green Mitzvah Day that combined community service with environmental education through: an Environmental Justice tour to a nearby Superfund Site followed by a panel discussion and advocacy project for adults; green crafts, recycling games, and storytelling with environmental lessons for kids; and an informational display on organic foods and energy conservation created by the teens in the Jews and Ecology course. They also used the annual food donation campaign as an opportunity to distribute reusable shopping bags with the Anshe Emeth Green Team slogan, *Anshe Emeth Shomrei Adama*, "People of Truth, Protectors of Earth." The Green Mitzvah Day illustrates the community-wide nature of the sustainability initiative at Anshe Emeth; the organizers included leaders from administrative, worship, education, and social action areas who created a program that connected to the educational, spiritual, and social service traditions of their temple.

10. Temple Shalom (TS), Aberdeen NJ
Membership: approx. 300 families

Temple Shalom is a Reform Jewish congregation that was established fifty years ago by Jewish residents of a new suburb near the Atlantic coast of New Jersey. The temple was built in 1967 on land donated for that purpose by the developers who built the area homes. The faith community includes some founding members and their descendents as well as many "newcomers" who have moved to the area over the last half-century. It is an affluent congregation with strong religious education and social action programs.

Like Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, the sustainability initiative at Temple Shalom emerged in response to the Union of Reform Judaism's campaign to encourage congregations to "go green." In 2010, the Union for Reform Judaism offered grants to offset the costs for congregations to enroll in the GreenFaith certification program. The vice president of the temple

board introduced the idea of applying for the program and received support from the rabbi and board members. The vice president asked Margo Wolfson, a community college biology professor, life-long environmentalist, and active volunteer in Temple Shalom's religious education program, to lead a Green Team. Wolfson jumped at the opportunity. She had occasionally included environmental ethics in her 3rd-6th grade classes and had previously helped organize two Earth Day programs at Temple Shalom. The GreenFaith certification program would make it possible to expand these efforts to the entire temple.

GreenFaith certification requires activities in areas of worship and education (Spirit), advocacy and social outreach (Justice), and resource conservation through modifications to facilities and administrative practices (Stewardship). By requiring activities in all three areas, the program aims to help faith communities become environmental leaders by strengthening their perception that protecting the environment and combating environmental injustices are religious values and educating members about ways to reduce resource consumption in their religious organizations and personal lives. The Temple Shalom Green Team set two major goals for its certification plan: 1) To inspire and educate the faith community, both about environmental issues and to show that environmentalism is a Jewish cause; and 2) To green the synagogue and lead by example, showing that living "greener" is attainable.

The sustainability activities implemented to fulfill these goals at Temple Shalom reflected the human and physical resources of the faith community. The Green Team had strong representation from the religious education and social action committees, and strong support from the rabbi. Rabbi Malinger led the Spirit component with several sermons linking sustainability to Jewish obligations to help repair God's creation. Wolfson worked with other members of the religious education program to increase inclusion of environmental themes in classes and activities for all age levels and the rabbi developed a Jewish Food Justice Program for Teens.

The physical context also shaped green efforts at Temple Shalom. The building sits on almost three acres of land in a suburb of Aberdeen, just a few miles from the Atlantic coast. There are green spaces on the north and east sides of the building and the parking lot on the south side slopes down to a wetland. Due to the southern sun exposure created by the parking area, the temple roof provided a good site for solar energy; congregation members contributed installation knowledge and funds to set up a solar array. In the green space on the north side of

the building, Lenore Robinson, the chair of the Social Action Committee, organized an interfaith community garden to raise fresh produce for donation to a local food pantry. Although Robinson had little prior gardening experience, the Gan Tikvah, or Garden of Hope, brought together people from three faith communities and, among them, they had the knowledge, gardening tools, and volunteer numbers to make the project successful.

CASE CLUSTER III: MONASTIC CASE SITES

The monastic case studies, focused on communities in which men and women have chosen to dedicate their lives to religion as monks and nuns, have greater emphasis on land stewardship through sustainable resource management activities than the non-monastic cases. These five cases, which are the longest-lived initiatives among the fifteen cases studied, emerged among faith communities with land holdings, where concerns about the natural environment motivated the members to undertake ecosystem restoration projects and adopt sustainable management practices for forests and farm lands. In some of these five cases, land stewardship practices were inspired by community members with formal education in natural sciences, who then encouraged the larger community to adopt new practices. In others, however, a general ideal of caring for the earth emerged from the community as a whole and led to development of new management systems. As environmental concerns in the United States shifted toward increased awareness of climate change, these monastic community sustainability initiatives were expanded to include additional conservation practices such as recycling, energy conservation, and renewable energy generation.

11. Congregation of St. Joseph of Nazareth (CJN), Sisters of St. Joseph, Kalamazoo MI Membership: 191

Concern for the environment has been a theme for the Congregation of St. Joseph of Nazareth for more than four decades. This community of Catholic women religious dates back to 1889, when the first sisters arrived in Kalamazoo MI to establish a hospital and founded the congregation of Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth on 400 acres of farmland. The Nazareth campus, which once included an orphanage, school and college (1914-1992), is the motherhouse from which the sisters conducted their ministries in healthcare, social work, education, pastoral care, and spiritual development. Many of the former buildings have been converted to new uses

through agreements with secular organizations but at the time of this study, the campus still included a retreat center and residential facilities for members. In 2007, seven separate communities of the Sisters of St. Joseph joined together to form the Congregation of St. Joseph, which is distributed across several states but retains separate motherhouses for each group.

Recognition of the importance of environmental sustainability as a religious value has been fostered among the Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth by Sister Virginia (Ginny) Jones, who arrived in 1968 to serve as an environmental science teacher for Nazareth College. At that time, the Sisters of St. Joseph were responding to Vatican II (1962-65)³ by expanding their ministry to address new social concerns, which included the environment. Kalamazoo's first Earth Day celebration was held at the Nazareth campus in 1970, hosted by the sisters, and, over the years, the sisters have applied sustainable management principles to two parcels of land. The first is a 60-acre wetland preserve on the edge of the main Nazareth convent campus. In her role as science teacher, Sr. Ginny developed the prairie fen wetland into an outdoor classroom for Nazareth College. Her students built trails and planted trees in the wetland, which was dedicated as the Bow in the Clouds Natural Area in 1973. Jones selected the name to express the idea that humans and nature are all one in their relationship to God: "The name Bow in the Clouds comes from the Bible (Genesis 9:13) where God set a 'bow in the clouds' as a sign of the new covenant between Him and the earth."

The second property under sustainable management practices is a former dairy farm the sisters purchased in 1948. Nazareth Farm, which is about 3 miles from the convent, once provided dairy and beef products for Nazareth College, Borgess Hospital and other institutions operated by the sisters. In 1993, when the farm products were no longer needed, most of the land was enrolled in the Federal Conservation Reserve Program. The sisters began efforts to restore some of the lands through plantings of trees and vegetative cover and, with assistance from a wildlife biologist, they developed a wildlife management plan designed to attract pheasants and maximize wildlife diversity.

Religious values motivated the sisters to restore these former farmlands, even though it meant losing income that had previously been generated by leasing their land to farmers. The mission of the order is based on the idea that "all are one," from the scriptural passage: "*That all*

³ Vatican II, or the Second Vatican Council, gathered together Catholic Church leaders to evaluate relations between the Roman Catholic Church and the modern world. It produced recommendations for institutional changes to make the Church more compatible with current social contexts.

may be one as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; I pray that they may be one in Us” (John 17:21). Among the Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth, this oneness is understood to include non-human species as well as human beings. Therefore, the sisters feel an obligation to care for the wildlife on their lands as well as the people in their local community. They also see connections between healing the natural environment and healing people, thereby linking their environmental work with their order’s long heritage of medical ministry.

Earth care was formally incorporated into the Nazareth community goals in 1989, when the sisters added concern for environmental issues to the directional statement guiding their work. The statement described environmental issues as part of larger pattern of imbalance:

There is a sense that many of our relationships with each other, with the earth, and with our God have become distorted by our consumer society and by the philosophy that the “earth” is ours to do with as we will. We see environmental issues as spiritual issues calling us to deep conversion of spirit, a change of perspective, and we recognize a call to share these insights with other people of good will.

In order to address this imbalance, the leadership team asked Sr. Ginny Jones to develop some environmental programs. The result was formation of a Center for Ecology and Spirituality that provided spiritual retreats and educational resources for the local community, as well as continued expansion of land stewardship practices. Thus, the community’s focus on healing included both humans and nature: the earth healing processes enacted through practice of land stewardship were perceived as part of human spiritual healing and both were necessary to “restore a sense of balance and relationship with the whole earth community” (Jones 1996).

In 2007, when the aging community decided it no longer had the people power to maintain the sixty-acre wetland preserve, the sisters donated Bow in the Clouds to the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, so the land would be cared for while remaining open to the public. According to Jones, the sisters hope people will use it for “re-creation.”

We know many people today are separated from religious tradition, and we respect that. We also know that before formal religion existed, people encountered something of the holy in the natural world. And that something — that peace, solitude and wisdom — is what we believe people can still find here.

Although Jones was the strongest advocate for environmental stewardship at Nazareth, the community of sisters has supported her work because they share her beliefs about the importance of protecting nature. The community expressed its environmental values by providing an endowment for maintenance of the lands it donated to the Southwest Michigan

Land Conservancy. Furthermore, in addition to their land stewardship, the sisters pursue conservation practices in their community lives. They conserve water and energy, recycle and require use of recycled products in their facilities, buy fair trade goods, use soy-based inks, mandate chemical-free landscape management, ensure that construction projects on their properties follow eco-friendly processes, and replace their gas-powered cars with hybrids as opportunity arises. They also work with community organizations to promote local environmental awareness and engage in advocacy work, petitioning elected officials to protect Earth from climate change.

12. Saint John's Abbey (SJA), Collegeville MN
Membership: 153 monks

St. John's Abbey, a Catholic Benedictine monastery in the Avon Hills of central Minnesota, has an arboretum that comprises 2,700 acres of forests, wetlands, and prairie that are managed sustainably for the benefit of the land and for the purpose of educating people about land stewardship. The arboretum is a joint project between the abbey monks, who own the land, and St. John's University, which administers its educational programs. The university, which was begun by the monks who previously served as teachers and administrators, is now a separate institution, but the two contiguous organizations are economically intertwined through agreements to share facilities and services.

Establishment of the arboretum in 1997 marked the fulfillment of a vision that originated with Father Paul Schwietz. Schwietz had been actively concerned about natural environments since his undergraduate days at St. John's University in the 1970s, during which he majored in natural science. He entered the monastery after graduation, was ordained in 1982, and earned a master's degree in forestry from the University of Minnesota so he could become the Abbey's land manager in 1985. He immediately began to implement habitat restoration projects, putting in two dams to recreate a wetland on sixty acres that had previously been drained for agricultural use and restoring an adjacent area of prairie. These projects were part of Schwietz's larger vision in which the monastic community could "strengthen the witness of our commitment to sustainability" by creating a natural arboretum through which to teach about land stewardship. After a decade of work, demonstrating processes of land restoration and articulating connections

between the Abbey's Benedictine heritage and stewardship ideals, Schwietz's vision took shape as the St. John's Arboretum.

The arboretum's joint purposes of preservation and education fit well with the St. John's context. The abbey was founded in 1856 by German monks, who used the land for food and timber as they built a monastery and school. The Benedictine tradition emphasizes "stability," the idea of staying in one place to pursue religious life, and has a long heritage of farm-based monasteries. Since their founding, the monks of St. John's Abbey have used lumber from the forest in their woodshop and furniture business and engaged in various activities such as bee keeping, orcharding, maple sugar production, and bird watching. Agricultural activities tapered off in the 1950s, as the school and university grew too big to be self-sustaining, and much of the cleared farmland reverted to forests. This abbey history, combined with the Benedictine heritage of place-based religious practice, provided a basis for affirming connections between sustainable land stewardship and the spiritual purposes of the abbey.

Fr. Schwietz articulated these connections between religious values and land stewardship in his proposal for creation of a natural arboretum. He also emphasized the importance of using the arboretum to educate people about land management, an idea that evoked the abbey's long history of educational work and fit with emerging academic trends. The period in which Schwietz began his tenure as land manager coincided with development of an environmental studies program at St. John's University. This program quickly became one of the university's identifying characteristics due to its exceptional resources; abbey lands provided opportunities for field study and abbey records provided rare longitudinal data on local plant species.

Through presentation of this confluence of spiritual heritage with perceived benefits from preserving the land and using it for educational purposes, Schwietz and other members of the community (in the monastery, university, and neighboring area) succeeded in building support for creation of the St. John's Arboretum. The stewardship and education programs proved successful and fostered a sustainability ethic that gradually expanded throughout the St. John's community. In 2009, the university established an Office of Sustainability to implement changes to infrastructure and behavior at the university and the abbey. New sustainability activities include: institutional efforts to conserve energy and resources such as switching the campus power plant fuel from coal to natural gas; creation of a revolving loan fund for sustainability projects; and development of a campaign to inculcate conservation behavior among students as

an expression of Catholic values. The abbey is also host to a 575,000kW solar farm through a partnership with Xcel Energy.

*13. Villa Maria Farm (VM), Sisters of the Humility of Mary, Villa Maria PA
Membership: 158 sisters*

Sr. Barbara O'Donnell began exploring connections between sustainable land care and spiritual life at Villa Maria Convent in western Pennsylvania in 1990. At the time, however, it was not clear how her mission could be incorporated into any of the order's extant ministries so that she would be a contributing member of her community. Over the next decade, through self-education and a remarkable partnership with the Villa Maria land manager, O'Donnell created new environmental ministry and education programs, established an organic food program, and helped the convent formalize sustainable land stewardship systems for its 736-acre holdings. Today, the Villa includes 400 acres of sustainably managed forests, 300 acres of farmland that is mostly managed in accord with organic practices,⁴ and an organic produce garden.

In 1990, O'Donnell had retired after a career in education and administration and was ready to begin a new ministry. She felt called to "educate for the earth" but was not sure how to turn that calling into a viable practice. She found support for her efforts from Frank Romeo, the land manager, and from the librarian, both of whom helped her uncover the history of the community and its land. In 1864, when the Sisters of the Humility of Mary first arrived from France and bought a 250-acre farm, they practiced subsistence farming while developing ministries in education and medicine. During the 20th century, most sisters worked in schools and hospitals, but the Villa continued to produce food. At its height in 1970, the order's farm had expanded to more than 700 acres, including 300 acres of grain and hay, cattle, hogs, 10,000 laying hens, ten acres of orchards, and four acres of vegetable gardens. It was the largest diversified farm in the county until changes in both agricultural systems and the local community led to severe cutbacks in 1983. At that time, all the farm workers except Romeo were laid off, and the lands were shifted to a limited production of crops for charitable donation.

Arguing that organic food production fit with their heritage, O'Donnell convinced her order to let her experiment with an organic gardening initiative. Romeo, who had managed the

⁴ At five-year intervals, herbicides may be used in hay field preparation to suppress weeds. Yearly weed management relies on crop rotation and tilling; consequently, field crops are not fully organic but are generally chemical-free for three out of each five years.

farm during its heyday and longed for an opportunity to “bring it back to life,” provided instruction and assistance in the garden project. The garden was so successful, that it gave rise to a produce market and expansion of production. O’Donnell continually tried to integrate spirituality into her garden project because, for her, “the spirituality of the land is so real.” Motivated by her sense of being called to educate for the earth, which now included a desire to share her experiences of awe at the workings of nature and her discovery of the history of the Villa lands, she envisioned a new ministry that would combine spirituality and education with organic gardening. This combination of faith with food and education connected care for the earth with the strong educational tradition of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary order and the farm heritage of Villa Maria. The ministry, originally named Ecology and Faith and later renamed EverGreen, became part of the Villa Maria Retreat Center programming. Together with a companion program in Farm-Based Environmental Education, EverGreen helped make sustainability a core part of the mission of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary.

*14. Holy Wisdom Monastery (HWM), Benedictine Women of Madison, Madison WI
Membership: 3 sisters; 350 laity (who attend Sunday Assembly)*

The Benedictine Women of Madison are the three members of an ecumenical women’s monastery with a mission of “weaving prayer, hospitality, justice and care for the earth into a shared way of life.” Their mission is carried out in a platinum LEED-certified monastery building surrounded by 138 acres of land comprised of 100 acres of restored prairie, a small glacial lake, woodlands, an orchard and an organic vegetable gardens. The three sisters are at the center of a community that includes a small staff, volunteer board members, nearly 200 affiliated lay oblate men and women who apply the Rule of Benedict to their lives outside the monastery, and a Sunday Assembly congregation of about 350 people (approximately 200 attend services each week). The community of volunteers, oblates, and Sunday Assembly members grows each year, a testament to the value that people find in the spiritual practices and ministries of Holy Wisdom Monastery.

The earth care practices of the monastery emerged from a combination of influences. First, the sisters had a deep attachment to the place where they lived. A small group of Benedictine sisters had settled on ninety acres of land near Madison, WI, to establish a Catholic high school in the 1950s. These monastic daughters of Midwestern farmers had planted trees and

gardens, building personal connections to the land. Second, as developers moved into the area in the 1970s and 80s, the sisters watched surrounding farmland transformed into suburbs and mourned the loss of the old landscape. Finally, in 1985, a developer proposed building a golf course on top of the hill behind the monastery. The offer prompted a period of contemplation, in which the sisters pondered the question: “What would God want us to do?” Their high school had been transformed into a retreat center in 1966, but the building was large and expensive to operate. If they sold the land, they could use the money to start a new ministry elsewhere. After prayer and reflection, the sisters decided they wanted to remain on the land. Moreover, they decided that the land should be for all people, not for a wealthy few. In 1990, they began a formal discernment process to develop a vision for the future in which their community could live in place, make a living, and serve people. According to Sr. Mary David Walgenbach, “Having said, ‘no,’ to selling off land in the 1960s, 70, and 80s, we now said, ‘yes,’ to doing more with it.” They would open their community to Christian women from non-Catholic traditions and care for the land by converting their 100 acres of cornfield into prairie.

They found, however, that it is easier to articulate a vision for land restoration than to act on it. The monastery director (leader of a volunteer board of directors) set up a plan, calling for ten acres of farmland to be restored to prairie each year for a decade, but no one at Holy Wisdom actually had any idea of how to start restoring a prairie. To implement their plan, the monastery consulted with local experts from organizations such as the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and The Prairie Enthusiasts, a non-profit organization dedicated to protection and management of native prairie in the Upper Midwest. The monastery groundskeeper spent time with the ranger at a park near Holy Wisdom; he learned about prairie restoration processes and then organized volunteer work groups to collect and plant seed. Year by year, from 1996 to 2006, with design assistance and grants from the county, advice and financial support from the DNR, funds from bird protection organizations and the community, and lots of volunteer labor, 100 acres of fields were converted into prairie that protects Lake Mendota from polluting runoff, houses wildlife, and provides visitors with natural areas for reflection.

As the prairie restoration neared completion, the women decided it was time to do something about the monastery buildings. Since the old school building was too large for their needs and their location was not suitable for renting out space, the best course of action seemed to be tearing it down and constructing something that would meet their needs. They worked with

an architectural firm to plan a green building that would support core activities of worship and community interaction while connecting people with nature. Ninety-nine percent of the old building's materials were recycled. The new building houses chapel, kitchen, dining area/meeting space, offices, and library; it is platinum LEED-certified, with geo-thermal heating and cooling and solar panels providing a portion of the electricity. Skylights, windows, and natural materials in floors, walls, and ceilings conserve resources while integrating indoor and outdoor environments.

The efforts to care for the earth have enhanced the community at Holy Wisdom Monastery. Volunteers who work on the land build relationships with people and place. People who visit for religious services and retreats enjoy the simple beauty of the building and the peacefulness of the prairie, woods, and lake. They comment that they feel they are on holy ground. To Walgenbach, caring for the land advances the spiritual work of the monastery: "People come out and just walk the land. They have a place to stay in our retreat center. For people whose modern lives leave them tired and stressed, this space in creation helps them open up their interior space. Being out in nature restores them."

*15. Our Lady of Angels Convent (OLA), Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, Aston PA
Membership: 450 sisters (not all in residence)*

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia established Our Lady of Angels convent in the 1870s in the rolling hills near Aston PA. In the 1990s, development pressures in the area combined with increasing concern about climate change to inspire the sisters to think about how the environment fit into their religious mission. The community decided that care for the environment was important to them because, as followers of St. Francis who called animals and birds his brothers and sisters, they had a duty to care for all of God's creation. They developed an environmental mission statement explaining their call to care for the environment:

Based on our Franciscan worldview, we believe that Jesus Christ came as brother to all created reality, and as Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia we acknowledge our oneness with the universe. We call ourselves to proclaim in a viable and tangible manner our belief in the Cosmic Christ. Therefore, we commit ourselves: to reverence all that exists; to preserve the integrity of the land entrusted to our care; to dialogue and explore with others the implications of eco-spirituality; to promote positive environmental behaviors; and to celebrate our oneness with the universe.

In order to turn put their mission into practice, an environmental task force created a set of guiding principles for action based on four ideas: Interconnectedness, Sustainability, Education,

and Witness. The community would fulfill their environmental mission with awareness that their actions affected the whole creation (Interconnectedness), that actions must not compromise the resources and choices of future generations (Sustainability), that their actions could serve to educate others about personal and corporate responsibility toward the environment (Education), and that actions related to their own land use and lifestyle should reflect their values (Witness).

The Sisters formed subcommittees to research potential activities in areas of education, land use, and sustainable living and hired Sr. Corinne Wright to serve as Manager of their Environmental Initiative. In education, the sisters collaborated with faculty from Neumann University to develop a Franciscan Center for Earth Education to provide a venue for ecological education within a Catholic Franciscan context. That center evolved into a Care of Creation program managed by faculty, staff, and students at the university. Land use was one area where Sr. Corinne decided their initiative could be particularly effective because it was an area that was under their control. The sisters owned 295 acres of land, 180 acres of which were still undeveloped. They decided to preserve those lands as habitat and to adopt new practices for the developed lands to make them more hospitable to wildlife.

To achieve these goals, they developed new policies for managing the lands. New development would only be approved if it did not damage ecosystems. Thus, when some hermitages were added to the convent's retreat center, the small residential units were built on platforms extending out over the edge of hill so that the soil would not be disturbed and walking trails were carefully designed to take visitors through the woods in the ravine area below the hermitages without causing erosion to the steep slopes. In this way, the retreat center was designed to incorporate nature into spiritual practice. New policies also increased environmental health on lands that were already developed. Areas of lawn were replaced with native meadow plants and native trees to provide food and shelter for wildlife. In garden areas, native plants that would be beneficial to local animals and insects supplanted non-native ornamentals. Sr. Corinne used information from Pennsylvania State University's agricultural extension services to develop an integrated pest management plan so the lands could be maintained without using toxic chemicals to control weeds or insects.

In the area of sustainable living, the sisters adopted a range of activities. In 2000, they hired a farmer to start a community-supported agriculture venture on six acres of land. Red Hill Farm benefited from material support from the convent, which purchased a tractor and paid for

the farm manager's salary, thereby making it easier to start a new business that would eventually be funded by shareholders. Several of the sisters purchased individual shares in the CSA and the convent kitchens also purchased fresh produce to use in the sisters' retirement home. By 2003, the farm had stabilized with a membership of approximately 120 local families and the annual harvest festival had become a major social event that brought community members and sisters together. For a while, the convent's kitchen waste was sent to a composting facility to be transformed into compost that would be sent back to enrich the soils at Red Hill Farm. This program eventually dissolved when the composting company went out of business. Our Lady of Angels convent also incorporated conservation into other aspects of its daily operations. The administrative offices purchased supplies with high recycled content and developed programs to recycle aluminum, paper, plastic, batteries, furniture, motor oil and light bulbs. Custodians switched to non-toxic cleaning supplies and the sisters installed solar panels on the roof of the barn to reduce their carbon footprint. Finally, the Sisters of St. Francis integrated care of creation into their social justice ministry work by adding it to their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) ministry. In this ministry, the sisters purchased shares in corporations, then attended stockholder meetings to submit proposals asking the companies to adopt policies that would track the social impacts of their supply chains. Once the community made care for the environment part of its mission, the members who worked in CSR began adding environmental impacts to the information they requested from corporations. They also began to lobby for regulation of hydraulic fracturing, a fossil fuel extraction technique that has polluted water supplies in some of the poorest regions of Pennsylvania.

Many of these activities did not have an immediate financial return on investment yet the Sisters of St. Francis undertook them because of their "commitment to the environment based on their Franciscan charism, which sees all of creation as sister and brother." This sense of a connection between faith and earth care was reinforced through religious activities. Sisters visited Red Hill Farm to offer prayers in the spring when the farm was prepared for the new growing season and joined in the harvest festival in the fall. The grounds where they have restored native flora to create habitat for wildlife include a "stations of the cross" trail, where people can perform the prayer ritual that commemorates Jesus' last day on earth while walking past native ferns that grow in the shade of magnificent oaks. Nearby, a Cantic of the Sun garden offers opportunities to contemplate God's presence in creation with quotations from St.

Francis' prayer in which God is "praised through all your creatures" including Brother Sun, Sister Moon, and the elements of wind, water, fire, and earth.

CONCLUSION: FAITH COMMUNITIES AS STEWARDS OF SPIRIT AND EARTH

The purpose of a faith community is, first and foremost, to assist its members in cultivating their spiritual lives by providing opportunities to participate in collective and individual activities of worship, spiritual study, and ministry work. The communities of faith in this study have integrated sustainability into their organizational missions and incorporated environmental activities into various elements of their organizational behavior, thereby becoming communities in which people see themselves as stewards of both spirit and earth. The case summaries above described the processes by which these faith communities adopted sustainability as a subject to be addressed within the context of a religious organization. Although the summaries are brief, they provide an overview of the genesis and evolution of each sustainability initiative by describing triggering events, leadership, activities undertaken, and notable characteristics of each faith community's environmental efforts. The following chapter compares the fifteen cases to identify similarities and differences in the processes through which these initiatives emerged and became integrated into the communities of faith.

Chapter 5

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS Key Similarities and Differences

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 provided an overview of the circumstances that led to emergence of these fifteen sustainability initiatives and described some of the activities undertaken in each faith community. This chapter compares the cases to identify similarities and differences among the initiatives, with particular attention to factors that affected the genesis and evolution of their sustainability efforts. Although the details of the cases vary, the overarching narratives are remarkably aligned. Each case is a story in which an *opportunity* triggered a response from *individuals* who implemented activities within the *organizational context* of their faith communities. Together, these three factors--triggering opportunity, individual responses, and organizational context--provide a simple framework that can be used for a deeper examination of factors and processes that enabled the initiatives to take root in these communities of faith.

TRIGGERS OF INITIATIVE EMERGENCE

The fifteen initiatives emerged in response to five triggers that created opportunities to take action through the venue of a faith community: prompts from faith leaders, reaction to a local environmental threat, projects associated with an individual's career goals, community discernment processes, and opportunities provided by external organizations. The first four triggers were *internal* to the faith communities, arising either from individual and affinity group responses to environmental issues or from congregational responses to periods of community transition. The fifth trigger came from sources *external* to the faith communities, such as interfaith organizations and regional denominational organizations that invited the faith communities to participate in an activity or program. The following comparison of the cases is

organized according to these five triggers in order to identify key factors and patterns that shaped the development of the sustainability initiatives (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Types of Triggers for Sustainability Initiatives

Trigger locus	Type of Trigger	Organic Cases	Green-certified Cases	Monastic Cases	Total
Internal	1. Faith leader prompt	2			2
Internal	2. Local environmental threat	1			1
Internal	3. Career-related projects			3	3
Internal	4. Community discernment	2	1	2	5
External	5. Opportunity from external organization	1	3		4

This analysis makes a distinction between triggers that motivate individual actions and triggers that lead to sustainability initiatives. An individual may have experiences that cause environmental concerns that lead to personal actions, which may in turn inspire members of the wider faith community to undertake environmental activities. In this chain of events, the trigger for the sustainability initiative is the action that inspired the community, not the preceding experience that affected the individual. For example, in several of the cases, a few community members formed study groups to explore shared interests in the environment, however these groups were focused on personal reading and discussion rather than action and, therefore, the founding of a group does not qualify as emergence of a sustainability *initiative*. These study groups could, however, serve as precursors to initiatives if the members eventually undertook actions that triggered emergence of initiatives within the communities. Because this chapter focuses on triggers that led to emergence of initiatives, experiences that affected individuals personally are noted only for their role in motivating individuals to act in ways that triggered initiatives within their faith communities. These personal experiences are, however, important for understanding initiative development and will be examined in more depth in the next chapter.

1. FAITH LEADER PROMPT AS TRIGGER

At Madison Christian Community (MCC) and Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor (VAA), actions by clergy who became concerned about climate change triggered environmental efforts. At Vineyard, the prompt took the form of a series of sermons about the Christian obligation to care for creation and address climate change. At Madison Christian Community, the prompt came from the minister’s interest in exploring the possibility of installing a wind turbine on the

church grounds. In both cases, the pastors presented ideas about people of faith as environmental stewards, which triggered formation of small groups to explore implementation of sustainability efforts in church facilities.

The sustainability initiatives in these two faith communities evolved along similar trajectories: affinity groups developed a project or activity in response to the originating trigger, which then led to further activities and adoption of sustainability as an area of ministry for the religious organization as a whole. At Madison Christian Community, the pastor's interest in alternative energy to mitigate climate change led to installation of solar panels and adoption of energy conservation practices. The following year, the pastor helped expand the community garden to include areas for Children's Garden and food pantry ministries. At Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor, the minister's climate change sermons motivated the formation of Green Vineyard, a lay group that worked to make the church more sustainable through building upgrades to improve energy efficiency and institution of practices such as recycling and energy conservation. Just as declining membership caused Green Vineyard to lose steam, a new leader emerged to organize a Community Garden Ministry that became the focus for a renewal of the church's commitment to sustainability.

2. LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL THREAT AS TRIGGER

A small group also led the way at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg (TPC), where concern about environmental damage in Shenandoah National Park motivated members of the Earth Care House Church, a group that had formerly focused on outdoor worship and study of connections between theology and environmental ethics, to engage in policy advocacy. In this third case, the prompt came from lay members who noted the threat to their local environment and brought the issue to the attention of their community. Their pastor helped them develop a means for responding to their concerns by suggesting they present a resolution at the annual General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA). After successful passage of their resolution requesting that all Presbyterians support clean air regulations, the Earth Care House Church members went on to engage in further environmental advocacy in response to emerging issues, such as concerns about hydrofracking, and implemented conservation practices at the church to reduce the ecological footprint of their religious organization.

In this case, as in the two cases that emerged in response to clergy prompts, there is a similar pattern of interaction between clergy, who provide inspiration and guidance, and affinity groups that form to develop and implement actions. The three cases also followed similar trajectories from originating project to community initiative: as new activity ideas were implemented, the sustainability initiatives expanded and became more embedded in the communities, each of which came to include environmental stewardship in its community mission. Clergy contributed to the processes of integrating sustainability into their communities by advising environmentally focused lay groups (TPC, VAA), proposing and participating in projects (MCC), and presenting sustainability as a faith issue (all three). Hence, the processes by which these three initiatives evolved, growing from their origins with a few activities related to the concerns of individual members (clergy and laity) into community-wide sustainability social norms, were shaped by four elements: individuals who led the initiatives; clergy who played roles in fostering initiative development; congregations that became involved with an issue that originated with a small group; and organizational structures, such as house churches and task forces, through which individuals took action.

3. CAREER-RELATED TRIGGERS

Career-related personal interests triggered the shift toward land stewardship in three monastic communities, which followed similar paths from single project to community-wide sustainability ethos. At Nazareth (CJN), Saint John's Abbey (SJA), and Villa Maria (VM), individual community members began projects related to their careers within the faith organizations, and those projects gradually grew into community-based initiatives. Sister Ginny Jones established the Bow in the Clouds Natural Area as an outdoor classroom for her biology classes at Nazareth College and later developed retreat programs focused on eco-spirituality, which laid the foundations for her community of sisters to consider care for the earth as a facet of their religious lives. The community then applied those values to restoration of their former dairy farmland and later invested financial resources to ensure that the lands they had cared for would be preserved into the future. They also instituted conservation practices in organizational facilities to reduce use of natural resources. At Saint John's Abbey, Father Paul Schwietz took up the position of land manager and began restoring ecosystems in areas that had once been used for agriculture. His activities helped establish land stewardship as a community value and,

ultimately, led to formation of an arboretum dedicated to educating people about sustainable land management. This land stewardship paved the way for conservation practices such as replacing coal-based electricity with power from natural gas and solar panels. At Villa Maria, Sister Barbara O'Donnell's experiment with organic gardening led to a rebirth of agricultural activity at the convent, in which organic farming and sustainable forestry were combined with environmental education and spirituality programs. Building on these programs, the community established a formal land ethic and integrated sustainability into administrative and facilities management.

As in the non-monastic cases, early projects undertaken to address the interests of individuals paved the way for development of community-wide sustainability ethics. The path from first project to community initiative was not, however, either smooth or straightforward since the monastic organizations had to be reorganized to accommodate new career paths and activities. Employee positions (e.g. land manager at Saint John's Abbey and Villa Maria) were adapted, new employee positions (e.g. coordinator of newly formed eco-spirituality retreat ministries at Villa Maria and Nazareth) were created, new organizational committees were formed to develop land ethics and oversee land management, and employees were hired to implement new ventures such as the Saint John's Arboretum and the Villa Maria Farm. Thus, the organizational structures within which the initiatives were implemented had significant influence on their development.

In order to make these innovations possible, the individuals who championed sustainable land stewardship had to cultivate support for their ideas within their faith communities. That process of building support was facilitated by "faith leaders," a term used here to describe the people who serve as the organizational and spiritual leaders in communities. These faith leaders fulfilled two key roles played by clergy in non-monastic cases. First, people in organizational leadership promoted sustainability by giving permission for individuals to take up new career paths and providing resources for implementation of proposed projects. Second, people in spiritual leadership roles led study groups to explore connections between faith and environmental issues and coordinated task forces to develop formal sustainability plans. These spiritual leaders included women religious (who are not ordained as clergy in the Catholic Church) as well as clergy and scholars from both inside and outside the community

membership.¹ The actions of these faith leaders, the processes through which the congregational membership became involved with the initiatives, and the organizational structures all shaped development of initiatives that began in response to the career goals of these monks and nuns.

4. COMMUNITY DISCERNMENT PROCESSES AS TRIGGER

In contrast to the previous six cases, with their slow transition from first project to adoption of sustainability as a community-wide initiative, the five initiatives triggered by community discernment processes were perceived as community-wide activities from their inception. These discernment processes occurred during periods of transition, in which the faith communities evaluated how to address particular community needs that would affect the future of their religious organizations. Consequently, there was extensive congregational involvement in the discernment processes, as the communities defined long and short-term goals, with particular emphasis on where to focus ministry efforts or how to address disjunctions between organizational needs and infrastructure. Once sustainability was introduced into the discussion, these discernment processes provided opportunities for extended community study of sustainability as a faith issue, which led to widespread endorsement of a sustainability ethic before the communities undertook their initiatives.

Broad congregational support for sustainability initiatives did not, however, guarantee a smooth transition from ethic to initiative implementation. Among the three non-monastic faith communities that adopted sustainability ethics through discernment processes, the ease with which a community realized its sustainability goals depended on the issue that had prompted the discernment process. Development of the initiative at the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation was fairly straightforward because implementation focused on green building practices to address the infrastructure needs that had triggered the discernment process. Once the rabbi and governance board presented the idea for a green building to the congregation and received a positive response, implementation followed a standard process for new construction. A building committee worked with a construction firm to design a synagogue that would meet community needs and conform to LEED construction guidelines.

¹ Women religious often invited clergy and scholars from outside their monastic communities to contribute to their community planning processes.

For communities in which sustainability was adopted as a component of the community mission, but for which there was no specific environmental project or concern underlying that decision, transforming ethic into action proved more challenging. At Trinity Presbyterian Church of East Brunswick, members of the Trinity Earth Shepherds group that was created to carry out the community's new mission to practice stewardship of creation, realized they lacked the knowledge necessary to fulfill their task. They enrolled in the GreenFaith Certification program, which provided leadership training, a programmatic structure, and informational resources that enabled them to transform practices at their church. At First Parish Church of Newbury, the community did not have a specific project in mind when it adopted a mission to be Stewards of Earth and Spirit. The tiny congregation of thirty-five members decided to create a community garden behind the church, but their first attempt withered due to lack of experience, poor soil, and neglect. Only when a member of the church took the lead and enlisted aid from experienced gardeners in the region did the garden become a venue for successfully enacting the community's stewardship mission.

Initiatives undertaken as a result of discernment processes in two monastic communities followed similar patterns: once the community adopted sustainability as an ethic, members had to figure out how to integrate the new value into their practices. The Sisters of St. Francis at Our Lady of Angels (OLA) decided that care for the earth was important to them and then had to determine how to implement that resolution on their property and through their ministries. Even when a community-wide discernment process led to adoption of a sustainability ethic with a specific focus, implementation could be challenging. At Holy Wisdom Monastery (HWM), a desire to remain in place and care for the land gave rise to the idea for restoring monastery farmland to prairie. Only after the idea had been adopted did the sisters and their staff set out to learn what they would actually have to do to fulfill their new mission.

The role of staff in these two initiatives highlights a distinction between monastic and non-monastic cases: monastic communities could assign responsibility for initiatives to fulltime workers whereas the non-monastic communities generally relied on volunteers to organize and implement their environmental efforts. At Holy Wisdom Monastery, lay staff learned new skills in order to restore prairieland and, at Our Lady of Angels Convent, the community hired people for new positions in native plant landscaping and farm management, which were created to implement their plan for sustainable land stewardship. Additionally, sisters in administrative

positions added stewardship of creation to organizational practices and facilities management. The role of staff in these cases illustrates the significance of organizational structure as a factor affecting implementation of initiatives.

Whether staff members or volunteers, individuals who took leadership roles were just as significant for the development of the five discernment-triggered initiatives as for the six cases that grew out of projects related to clergy prompts, local environmental threats, and individual career interests. Individuals (FPN, HWM) and affinity groups (JRC) introduced the idea of sustainability into discernment processes, did preliminary research before asking their communities to adopt sustainability as a value (TNJ, JRC, OLA), and took responsibility for incorporating sustainability into their religious organizations. Those individuals often had to acquire new knowledge and locate resources for activities such as prairie restoration (HWM), recycling (OLA), gardening (FPN), and greening their religious organization (TNJ, OLA). Faith leaders and clergy also played pivotal roles by setting the stage for discernment of new mission areas (FPN, TNJ, HWM, OLA) and promoting sustainability as a faith issue once the idea was introduced (JRC, HWM).

The progression of these five discernment-based initiatives was similar to the progression of the six that emerged from individual interests: despite the broad scope of their visions for a community-wide sustainability ethic, the initiatives started with a few projects and gradually expanded to include an extended array of activities. Members of Holy Wisdom spent a few years practicing stewardship of earth by restoring a prairie on former agricultural lands, then decided to follow green construction guidelines when they replaced their outdated monastery building. Our Lady of Angels began by hiring people to transform a section of land into the Red Hill Farm CSA; a few years later, they used green building techniques for construction of retreat facilities and incorporated environmental justice into their social justice advocacy work. First Parish Church of Newbury planted a few garden beds, which grew into a community garden and a nature-themed preschool. The Earth Shepherds at Trinity Presbyterian Church started with some educational programs and CFLs and eventually led their church to become the first GreenFaith certified congregation. Only the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation moved directly from adoption of sustainability as a goal to construction of the green synagogue that fulfilled their environmental ethic.

Despite the similarities in the evolution of the eleven cases, there are notable distinctions between initiatives that grew out of individual/affinity group projects and those that emerged from discernment processes. Discernment processes increased levels of congregational involvement and expanded the scope of the sustainability mission, particularly during early stages of the sustainability initiative. Thus, comparing initiatives that emerged from discernment processes with those that grew out of individual members' interests highlights some factors that shaped the eleven initiatives. The initiatives followed similar progressions, evolving from a few projects to an extensive set of activities, and individuals played significant roles in their creation and implementation. However, development also varied due to differences in levels of involvement from faith leaders and the wider congregation, as well as variations in organizational structures.

5. EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES AS TRIGGER

The final trigger differed from the other three in that it came from outside the faith communities. Four cases have sustainability initiatives that originated when external organizations presented the communities with opportunities to participate in local environmental programs. Among these initiatives, the decision to join the proffered activities came from grassroots membership in two cases and from organizational leadership in the other two.

Grassroots Responses

At both First Universalist Church and St. Thomas Aquinas, lay members of the faith communities responded to outreach from an external organization and formed affinity groups to participate in the opportunities presented by the external organization. At First Universalist Church of Rockland, a representative from the Maine Council of Churches asked if the community would join its advocacy campaign focused on climate change legislation; some church members formed an Earth Team to facilitate participation in that advocacy effort and subsequent Maine Council projects. At St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, members formed a Green Committee in response to the Catholic Green Initiative for the Santa Clara Valley, which encouraged all parishes in the Diocese of San Jose to adopt environmentally sustainable practices.

Despite similar origins, development of these two initiatives was quite different due to their respective community contexts. The Earth Team at First Universalist Church became

dissatisfied with the scale of environmental activities available through the Maine Council of Churches and enrolled in their denomination's Green Sanctuary Program in order to expand their efforts into a community-wide initiative. The certification program provided a structure for integrating sustainability throughout the faith community by requiring activities in worship, education, social justice ministry, and facilities management. The certification program expanded the scale of the sustainability initiative from a small group activity to a community ethic, realization of which involved support from clergy, staff, members of relevant committees, and the congregational membership.

The Green Committee at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish also envisioned its sustainability initiative as a parish-wide mission. The Catholic Greening Initiative of the Diocese of San Jose, which triggered their initiative, provided legitimacy for designating sustainability as a religious value and offered resources for prayer, study, and actions to address a suite of environmental issues such as resource conservation, climate change, and pollution prevention. In spite of their broad mission, committee resources and organizational structures (e.g. designating the Green Committee as a subgroup of the Facilities Committee) channeled the parish greening initiative toward activities related to energy conservation through technology upgrades, and resource conservation through behavior changes among staff. There was little opportunity to incorporate sustainability into worship, education, or social ministries. Therefore, although the sustainability groups at St. Thomas Aquinas and First Universalist Church both envisioned their initiatives as mechanisms for implementing community-wide sustainability ethics, development of their respective environmental activities was affected by their community contexts, especially the organizational structures and differing modes of involvement from clergy and congregations.

Organizational Leadership Responses

In contrast to the grassroots origins of the preceding two cases, the sustainability efforts in the final two cases began when organizational leaders responded to external opportunities. In New Jersey, Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple and Temple Shalom undertook sustainability initiatives because board members proposed that their temples participate in the GreenFaith certification program. In both cases, the board members were reacting to outreach from the regional branch of the Union of Reformed Judaism, their denomination's umbrella organization, which had decided to provide support for enrollment in the GreenFaith program as a means of promoting environmental action among its member congregations. Once the leadership boards of

the temples approved the idea to enroll in the certification programs, they enlisted community members known to be strong environmentalists to lead their green initiatives.

Juxtaposing the two temple cases reveals similarities and differences in the unfolding of their sustainability initiatives that illustrate how factors within faith communities affected development of sustainability initiatives. These communities have notable similarities: they belong to the same religious denomination, are located only thirty miles apart, and have memberships dominated by middle-class professionals. Both initiatives were coordinated by environmental educators and had support from rabbis who led environmentally themed worship services and incorporated environmental issues into youth programs. Despite this shared emphasis on educational programming, the processes by which resource conservation activities were implemented differed from one community to the other. Temple Shalom's accomplishments took the form of a series of distinct projects under the auspices of different committees, including installation of solar panels (Facilities Committee) and creating a community garden (Social Action Committee). In contrast, although some activities at Anshe Emeth were particular to one segment of the organization (e.g. youth education), other projects like the Green Mitzvah Day were cooperatively developed by organizers from administration, education, worship, and social justice areas of the faith community.

The differences in the processes for creating and implementing activities at the two Reform temples highlight the influence of individuals, congregational involvement, and the opportunities and constraints provided by organizational context. Despite using a common programmatic structure, differences among their communities caused variations in the development of the initiatives. Each had a Green Team comprised of community members with ties to various areas of the organization, and the activities they undertook intersected with structures that existed to implement the mission and ministries of their respective faith organization. So, for example, incorporating sustainability into a pre-existing annual community service program (AET) or having strong support from the chair of the Facilities Committee (TS) shaped the types of activities undertaken within each community. Even the physical context provided constraints and opportunities that affected environmental activities. The roof at Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple was not strong enough to support solar panels, whereas Temple Shalom had a structurally sound roof with ample southern exposure. Temple Shalom had extensive grounds, which facilitated efforts to establish a community garden, while Anshe

Emeth, which has a parking lot but no green space, hopes to become a pick-up location for a Community Supported Agriculture project.

AN INTERPLAY OF FOUR CRITICAL DOMAINS

These fifteen sustainability initiatives emerged in response to a variety of triggers ranging from personal career aspirations to community discernment processes, from concern about an environmental threat affecting a beloved place to concerns about climate change as a threat to entire global systems. Some were proposed from the top, by senior clergy or board members, while others emerged from grassroots community member interests. A few began as community-wide missions while others started with narrower foci and gradually expanded. The variability of these perceived opportunities for action and the processes by which initiatives developed in response to the opportunities, demonstrates that triggers alone do not explain why these sustainability initiatives began or why they evolved into durable initiatives encompassing multiple activities. Certainly it seems clear that the emergence of sustainability initiatives in response to these triggering events was not inevitable. There are more than 300,000 congregations in the United States,² yet only a handful engage in comparable initiatives, with multiple activities sustained over periods of at least four years.³ Therefore, it is particularly interesting to ask why consequential and durable initiatives developed in these fifteen cases.

One essential element in the emergence and development of these initiatives was the role played by individuals. Individuals were the champions who organized and implemented the initiatives through the venue of their faith communities, regardless of whether they were triggered by outreach from external organizations or by internal triggers arising from community discernment processes and personal environmental concerns. Individuals took the lead in responding to clergy prompts, protecting local environments, and developing career resources. In some cases, individuals introduced sustainability into discernment processes and, when community discernment processes resulted in adoption of sustainability as a community mission,

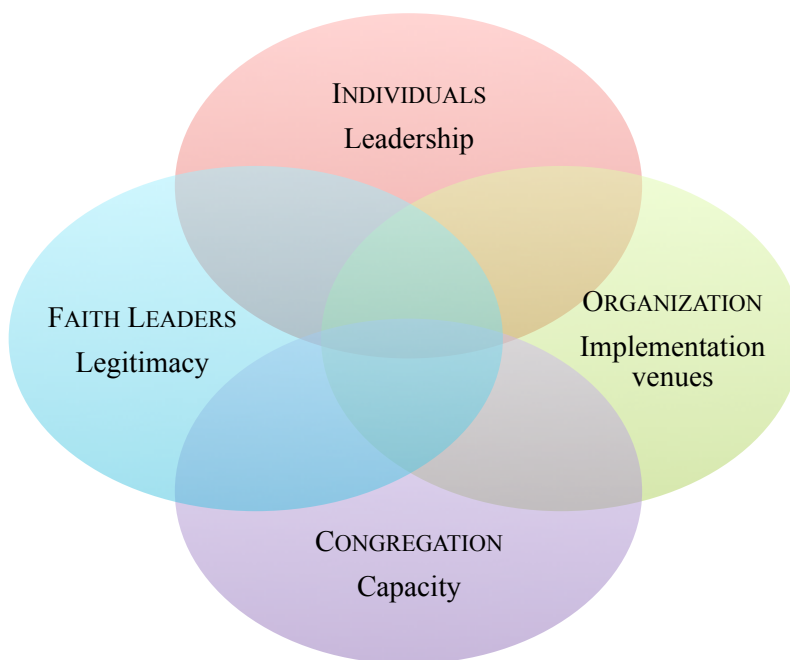
² The estimated number of congregations in the US is based on records collected by the National Council of Churches, Office of Research, Evaluation and Planning. 1998. *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*. Nashville: Abingdon Press

³ There are no formal statistics for the number of congregations that have undertaken sustainability efforts throughout the United States, however the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology, Interfaith Power and Light, and GreenFaith Program all collect case studies. Their case databases represent a tiny percentage of American congregations.

individuals and affinity groups were responsible for translating ethic into action. Finally, when external organizations presented opportunities for participating in environmental activities, individuals coordinated community engagement with those opportunities. The individuals did not, however, act in a vacuum. It is apparent from the case studies that these sustainability initiatives were created by individuals in interaction with the clergy/faith leaders, congregations, and organizational structures that made up their faith communities.

These domains of activity—individuals, faith leaders, congregation, and organization—provide an analytical framework that can be used to better understand the factors that contributed to emergence and development of these exemplary sustainability initiatives (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 The Four Domains of Activity and Their Key Contributions



Individuals

In the individual domain, each initiative had champions who turned idea into action and, without them, the initiatives would not have come into existence. It is, however, notable that there are significant variations among the people who championed sustainability from community to community. Depending on the case, the individuals who played this pivotal role were clergy, staff, or laity; some were the originators who proposed adopting sustainability as a faith issue and others were community members responding to a request to lead a program proposed by someone else; some were long-time environmentalists and, for others, the environment was a new issue. Because champions are so prominent in these fifteen cases, their

role begs deeper examination. Cross-case analysis can help answer questions about motivations and characteristics that enabled individuals to successfully organize and implement these initiatives, thereby providing a better understanding of factors that affected the role of individuals in these cases.

Faith Leaders

Faith leaders played a particularly significant role in establishing the legitimacy of sustainability as a faith issue; hence the contributions of faith leaders influenced the adoption of sustainability as a social norm within the faith communities. There was, however, great variation among modes of involvement by faith leaders in the fifteen cases. In some cases, clergy led development of the initiatives while, in others, they provided support or advice while leaving the initiative in the hands of a lay group. Similarly, in some monastic communities, theologically astute spiritual leaders among the monks and nuns led development of the initiatives with varying levels of involvement from administrative leaders. Thus, levels of personal interest and modes of involvement by faith leaders varied across cases. Even sermons, the most obvious type of clergy contribution, ranged from consistent, long-term preaching on environmental themes to short-term or occasional reflections from the pulpit, and even no preaching at all. These variations raise questions about the ways motivations and personal characteristics influenced faith leader participation, and how their divergent modes of involvement affected development of the initiatives.

Congregation

Similarly, the involvement of the congregations was significant in all cases, but the modes and levels of engagement varied from one community to another. Involvement of the congregation affected the scope and scale of the sustainability initiatives since levels of support from the congregation members determined the availability of volunteers and material resources. Congregational participation in the processes through which sustainability initiatives were developed varied across the cases: some cases had community-wide discernment processes or used other mechanisms to include the wider congregation in initiative planning, while others relied on small groups or coalitions of committee chairs to organize their initiatives. The scale of congregational involvement in initiative implementation also differed in level (from extensive to minimal) and duration (from long-term to short-term). In light of these variations in the modes

and levels of involvement by the congregations, there is need for additional analysis in order to better understand how factors in this domain influenced development of the initiatives.

Organizational Structure

The initiatives developed within the context of a fourth domain, the faith organization, which affected the behavior of the individuals, faith leaders, and congregation. Organizational structures shaped the processes through which initiatives emerged, the venues through which activities were implemented, and the interactions among community members. In some cases, environmental activities were carried out by temporary task forces researching specific projects and, in other cases, by permanent committees created to fulfill organization-wide missions. Depending on the community, the greening efforts might be implemented under the auspices of a religious mission committee, a facilities committee, or through a small group ministry. These variations in the scale of the effort to integrate sustainability into the organization and in the location of the Green Team within the organization, illustrate some ways the structures of the faith organizations shaped development of the sustainability initiatives. Hence, the role of organizational structure in providing the context through which an initiative was developed and implemented begs deeper examination.

CONCLUSION

Comparison of the fifteen case studies indicates that the initiatives followed a general pattern in which passionate individuals responded to triggering events by organizing environmental activities through the venues of their faith communities. There was, however, no single, simple process through which sustainability became integrated into the faith organizations. Instead, the initiatives emerged and evolved through complex processes that were shaped by a dynamic interplay among the individuals who championed sustainability, the organizational structures within which the initiative resided, and the faith leaders and congregation that comprised the community of faith. Factors within these four domains of activity, and the interactions among them, affected the emergence, evolution, and outcomes of the initiatives described in the case studies. Hence, to fully comprehend the processes through which consequential and durable sustainability initiatives developed in these faith communities requires a deeper understanding of elements within each domain and of the dynamic interplay among them. The next four sections examine each of these four domains in depth.

DOMAIN I

INDIVIDUALS

Sustainability Initiative Leaders

INTRODUCTION

“Educate for the earth.” The sound of these words, spoken in her own voice, jolted Sister Barbara O’Donnell awake and set her on a path to create and nurture a faith-based sustainability initiative at the Villa Maria convent in western Pennsylvania. That path was not, however, either clearly marked or smooth. Despite a deep conviction that the words she had heard were a calling from God, and that they came in answer to her prayers about what new ministry work she should be undertaking after retiring from her previous career in academic administration, O’Donnell was uncertain of how to proceed because, “there was no model for ‘educating for the earth.’” Over time, O’Donnell and the faith community at Villa Maria developed their own model, encompassing land stewardship, organic gardening, farm-based environmental education, and eco-spirituality programs, but in 1990, when the journey began, the sisters had to educate themselves about sustainability before they could “educate for the earth.”

This combination of conviction about the need to pursue faith-based environmental action and uncertainty about how to proceed is a common theme in accounts about the origins of the sustainability initiatives in these fifteen case studies. The initiatives arose and grew into programs of consequence for their communities because of individuals who did not turn away from a challenge. They sought out information, asked advice, found allies and resources, experimented, and persevered, thereby providing the leadership necessary to get these initiatives started and carry them forward. Without these champions, sustainability might have remained an ideal with little practical expression in these faith communities. Therefore, the stories of these faith-based sustainability initiatives begin with the individuals who set them in motion and shaped their development. Who were these sustainability champions, why did they take action

through faith communities, and what characteristics contributed to their success? In order to understand the role individuals played in development of these initiatives and the factors that enabled them to successfully lead initiatives, the research focuses on the following questions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

Chapter 6

- What motivated the individuals who led and joined these sustainability initiatives to take action?
- Why choose a faith community as the venue through which to act?

Chapter 7

- What enabled these individuals' accomplishments?
- What challenges did they face and how did they respond to those challenges?
- How were individuals affected by participation in faith community sustainability initiatives?

Summary and Domain Interactions

- How did the Individuals Domain interact with the other three domains?

Chapter 6

INDIVIDUALS People of Faith, Stewards of Earth

I see the Earth as a gift from God to us and it is our obligation to be good stewards and take only what we need with no waste, so that it is sustainable for future generations.

Katia Reeves, St. Thomas Aquinas Parish

INTRODUCTION

Individuals played essential roles in organizing and implementing initiatives. Therefore, it is important to understand what motivated people to develop sustainability initiatives within the context of faith communities and whether there were characteristics that enabled these individuals to be effective in their efforts. This chapter examines the motivations that inspired some members to undertake earth care activities in faith communities. The next chapter explores factors that contributed to individuals' efficacy as initiative leaders.

MOTIVATIONS: INTERTWINED PERSONAL INTERESTS

The individuals who championed earth care in these fifteen cases took on the challenges of developing initiatives for their faith communities because they perceived these sustainability initiatives as a means through which to address personal interests. Although particular interests differed from person to person, they can be organized into two general themes of environmental and religious interests, which interviewees had come to see as intertwined. The individuals who led these initiatives did not, however, all follow the same path to arrive at the conviction that environmental issues are faith issues and that faith communities should be venues for environmental activities. In some cases, people with long-standing environmental interests had not previously perceived connections between their environmental concerns and their faith communities until they encountered an opportunity to explore the topic. In others, people of faith who had not paid much attention to environmental issues in the past became passionate about

earth care because of new circumstances linking environment to their religious lives. The divergent paths individuals traveled toward perception of a connection between faith and earth care shaped the development of the sustainability initiatives, affecting implementation processes and the types of activities undertaken. Therefore it is important to look deeper into the background interests that motivated the individuals who took on the task of developing and implementing these initiatives for their faith communities.

The personal interests that individuals described in discussing what motivated them to participate in a faith community’s sustainability initiative fall into three categories: environmental interests, religious interests, and personal windows of opportunity (see Table 6.1). These categories are not mutually exclusive, since, as stated above, religious and environmental interests became intertwined for the initiative leaders in the fifteen cases and, moreover, most interviewees described multiple interests that came together in their faith-based sustainability work. However, individuals usually mentioned specific topics or concerns that were particularly important to them; when these core interests became connected to additional interests, they felt the need to take action. Thus, the interconnection of these personal interests is a significant factor in explaining what motivated these individuals to champion earth care in their faith communities.

Table 6.1 Individuals’ Motivational Interests

Topics mentioned by individuals (one person may cite more than one topic)	Number of individuals
1. Environmental Interests	
• General concern for the environment	9
• Protection of local environment	5
• Interested in forestry	2
• Concerns about climate change	12
○ Need to protect world for descendants	6
• Interest in gardening	9
2. Religious Interest	
• Social justice ministry must include sustainability	11
• Religious duty to care for creation	5
• Stewardship as religious calling	5
• Pursuing religious vocation (career)	4
3. Personal Windows of Opportunity	6

1. ENVIRONMENTAL INTERESTS

Most individuals leading the sustainability activities in these fifteen religious organizations had environmental interests that preceded their involvement in the faith-based initiatives. Some were long-time “environmentalists,” who focused on protection of the natural

environment and belonged to organizations such as the Sierra Club, while others had more recently become concerned about the environment due to awareness of climate change and its predicted effects on the world their children would inherit. A subgroup had an interest in gardening, especially growing organic food. These environmental interests merged with religious life as the individuals found opportunities to connect the two topics.

Traditional Environmentalism: Protecting Nature

Some of the first sustainability initiatives to emerge among these fifteen cases were founded by individuals who had long-standing ties to the environmental movement. Sr. Ginny Jones, of the Congregation of St. Joseph, and Fr. Paul Schwietz, of Saint John's Abbey, both became environmentalists as undergraduates majoring in biology. Jones combined her environmental concerns with her religious life among the Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth where her calling to do environmental stewardship found expression through her work as a biology teacher at Nazareth College. She helped organize city-wide activities for the first Earth Day in 1970 and created a nature reserve on convent lands in 1973, where it served as an educational resource for her students. After the college closed in 1992, she made a detour into hospital administrative work before returning to her environmental calling by developing eco-spirituality programs that became part of a new retreat center ministry at the convent. Schwietz also forged a connection between his concern for the environment and his religious vocation. He took the position of land manager for Saint John's Abbey, in 1985, introduced sustainable land management practices for the Abbey forests, and began doing restoration work in some areas that had once been used for farming. Both Jones and Schwietz created careers that allowed them to incorporate their environmental interests into their religious vocations.

A similar theme of linked environmental and faith vocations runs through the story of Lynn Cameron, one of the founders of the Earth Care House Church, the group that carries out environmental ministry at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Cameron uses religiously evocative language to describe her environmentalism, saying she, "always felt a calling to care for the earth."¹ It was the opportunity to combine this environmental vocation

¹ Although the term "calling" may be used to describe a strong desire to do any type of work, it is particularly common as a way to describe the motive for doing religious work. Cf. Merriam Webster Dictionary.

with her faith tradition that motivated her to join Trinity. Cameron and her husband first met the Trinity pastor, Rev. Ann Held, at an environmental festival, where the Camerons were tending the Sierra Club display table. Discovering that Pastor Held shared their environmental concerns, the Camerons visited Trinity and decided to join the congregation, rather than remain in their previous church where the environment was never discussed. With support from Rev. Held, Lynn Cameron and two other environmentalist congregation members founded the Restoring Creation House Church (later renamed Earth Care House Church) to explore connections between Christianity and the environment.

For the sustainability champions in these early initiatives, combining environmental interests with their faith traditions was not clear-cut, especially since there was little precedent for the combination in the societies around them. Consequently, Jones and Cameron both noted that theological study was an important step in the development of their faith-based sustainability work. Jones drew on the writings of Catholic theologians like Teilhard de Chardin and Thomas Berry to explain why stewardship of the environment was an appropriate Catholic activity. Cameron and the members of the Restoring Creation House Church studied denominational reports and theological texts that described why care for the environment and sustainable development were moral obligations for Christians.² Through this study, Cameron found that her religious and environmental interests were drawn together:

We started with the biblical foundations and I think it was important to get clear that those foundations were there. I kind of lost faith in college and finding these biblical foundations was important to getting my faith back; it gave me a way to connect faith with my concerns.

For Cameron, exploring connections between her environmental concerns and theological teachings not only strengthened her faith, it motivated her and the house church members to take environmental action through their faith community because, “Once the theology was within us, we could act out our faith.”

Some of the theology we read was really dense and hard to understand. Then, after a couple years of study, people wanted to do something. It is not enough to be *against*

² Texts studied included: General Assembly Report, *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice* (Presbyterian Church (USA), 1990); General Assembly Report, *Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development* (1996); Matthew Fox, *Original Blessing* (New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 1983); Dieter T. Hessel, *Theology for Earth Community: A Field Guide* (New York: Orbis Books, 1996)

things, we needed to be *for* things. A lot of environmental work starts with being against something. But, what are you for? I guess for us, it's the idea of sustainability.

Having established a faith foundation for environmental action, the members of the house church were motivated to pursue sustainability as an expression of their religious mission.

New Environmentalism: Greening Organizations

Long-term environmentalists also took the lead at Temple Shalom and Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, two of the most recently formed initiatives, but in these cases their efforts began with a new area of environmental practice, the greening of organizations. At Temple Shalom in Aberdeen, NJ, when the board decided that the congregation should pursue certification as a green congregation through GreenFaith, an organization that promotes sustainability in faith communities, the vice president asked Margo Wolfson to lead the effort. She “jumped at the chance” because she was passionate about the environment.

I am an environmentalist from way back, starting in high school, when I had a wonderful biology teacher. I went on to teach biology myself. I joined the World Wildlife Fund and the Sierra Club when I was just a teenager. I think, being a city girl living in Brooklyn, I had an especially strong longing for the outdoors.

For Wolfson, leading the GreenFaith certification process provided an opportunity to engage with a topic of personal interest under the auspices of her faith community. Previously, she had participated in efforts to incorporate environment into Temple Shalom through Earth Day celebrations, observation of Tu B'Shevat, the Jewish “Arbor Day” that has come to be linked with environmental concerns, and activities on seed-planting and water conservation in the religious education classes that Wolfson taught for 3rd through 6th graders. However, prior to enrollment in the certification program, Wolfson felt that the environment was “kind of a piece off to the side but was not welcome in the main door” of the temple. Leading the GreenFaith certification process gave her “permission to bring it in the main door.”

Whereas earlier faith-based sustainability champions like Cameron and Jones went through gradual processes of theological study to lay the groundwork for their actions, Wolfson was able to begin her temple initiative confident that Judaism endorsed sustainability. Due to her long-standing interest in environmentalism, she was already well versed in teachings about connections between Judaism and ecology that had developed in the 1990s. She was familiar with the work of the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL), an “organization that deepens and broadens the Jewish community’s commitment to stewardship and protection of

the Earth through outreach, activism and Jewish learning” (<http://www.coejl.org/>), which provided some of the resources she used for the Earth Day and Tu B’Shevat services she had previously organized. Moreover, Temple Shalom belongs to the Reform Jewish tradition, which affirms that protecting the environment is an important aspect of the Jewish practice of *tikkun olam*, “repairing the world.” Even before the temple joined GreenFaith, Wolfson had identified environmental texts in the new Siddur, the book of daily prayers used by Reform temples, so that she could point them out to the children in religious education classes. For champions like Wolfson, the connections between religious values and environmentalism were well established before they encountered opportunities to take action in their faith communities.

Climate Change Transforms Environment into a Faith Issue

Interviewees in eight of the ten suburban communities mentioned climate change as an issue that motivated their efforts. For individuals at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish and Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor, climate change was the subject that transformed environmental issues into faith issues. Gerard McGuire, who helped organize the Green Committee at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, said his environmental and religious interests developed separately but came together in response to climate change. “My awareness of environmental issues was separate [from religion]; it was shaped by Al Gore and the environmental movement. The two were on parallel courses.” McGuire became involved in Gore’s Climate Project, through which he trained to give public presentations about climate change and he began telling his brother, who is a priest, that he ought to address the issue of climate change when he preached. In contrast to environmental issues, which were a fairly new interest for McGuire, religion had been important to him throughout his life. He had studied for the Catholic priesthood in his youth, then pursued other paths, which included exploration of eastern religions, before returning to his Catholic religious roots. Although eco-theology was not part of his Catholic theological training, McGuire had come to see care for the environment as integral to his religion because he sees the whole world as a manifestation of God and, “if you’re part of the greater whole that is God then you have to respect it all.” Because climate change damages God’s world and is most harmful to the poor and oppressed, the very people Jesus worked to help, McGuire argued that living more sustainably is an expression of Christian values and even went so far as to state that, “you can’t call yourself a Christian without being an environmentalist.”

While McGuire's statement may be extreme, it demonstrates the strength of his conviction that the moral teachings of his faith require him to take action in response to the predicted impacts of climate change. The two individuals who inaugurated the sustainability initiative at Vineyard Church came to a similar conclusion, as will be described below.

Gardeners Nourishing Soil and Soul

Individuals with a strong personal interest in growing organic food played significant roles organizing garden projects in seven cases. The majority of these gardeners had previous experience with home gardens but a few were completely new to the activity. In the beginning, Erin Stack, of First Parish Church of Newbury, was such an amateur that she had to enlist help from experienced gardeners in the local community to teach her and other members how to plan and care for the community garden they established at the church. Stack found the work so rewarding, she eventually founded a Community Supported Agriculture venture and became a farmer. Sr. Barbara O'Donnell came to organic gardening without previous experience but benefited from the guidance of Frank Romeo, the land manager at the Villa Maria convent. The more she learned and the more time she spent in the gardens, the more enthusiastic she became:

I was going up to the farm every day to watch things. I went regularly to watch the birthing of an eggplant. It really is like a birth the way the fruit emerges from the flower; that was fascinating to me. And the miracle of composting as 'waste' becomes fresh, black, and fragrant. It was like the new me, becoming rooted in the soil.

As O'Donnell's language indicates, for her, gardening was a spiritual activity. She felt connected to the divine through her awe at the workings of God's creation. She also saw her labor as an expression of her faith community's ministry work; part of the mission of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary, her religious order, is to care for the poor, and the new organic gardens became a resource for food donations.

Other individuals also mentioned that gardening was both a personal passion and a venue through which to practice ministry. Lisa Bauer, who coordinated care of the chickens in the gardens at Madison Christian Community, reflected on the role of interactions with nature as part of the spiritual development of her children.

"My girls, 6 and 9, are enamored with the chickens. They beg to go see them daily and jump right into chore mode. My youngest daughter has taught some to roost on her shoulder so she walks around as the chicken whisperer. She loves the idea that she can be a farmer some day. In my mind, that is a great ministry—connecting people with nature and our agricultural heritage. (Greene 2010)

An interest in organic food and teaching their children where food comes from motivated some young families like the Bauers to participate in garden projects, however, the majority of the leaders and volunteers were older. In the Children's Garden at the Madison Christian Community, most of the volunteers were women, often recently retired, for whom the garden had become "their passion" (Eighmy). Many of them lived in apartments or condos and had little yard space at home. Female, and some male, retirees were also prevalent among the workers in the food pantry garden and the group tending the restored prairie. Some volunteers had grown up with gardens and were delighted to have an opportunity to reengage with an activity from the past. Their enjoyment was furthered by the conviction that the work in the garden was an expression of their religious values to care for others. "People enjoy gardening because they feel connected to the earth and they find satisfaction in feeding people" (Keesey-Berg).

2. RELIGIOUS INTERESTS

Across the fifteen cases, the individuals who took on the challenge of leading sustainability initiatives in their faith communities had strong faith components to their lives. The sustainability champions included men and women with full-time religious vocations in monastic communities, pastors and rabbis for whom religion defined their worldviews, and lay people who were deeply invested in their religious traditions and sought to "live their values" in their daily lives. In the words of Gerard McGuire, "Because I am a 'recycled' Catholic [who returned to his natal religion as an adult], I see my faith in a different way; I want to be active." For these people of faith, seeing connections between religion and sustainability created a significant motivation to take action in order to address environmental issues.

Katia Reeves, leader of the Green Committee at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish at the time of this study, noted that she was educated by nuns from kindergarten through tenth grade and, consequently, her faith "probably motivates everything I do and shaped who I am." Reeves described her sustainability activities as an expression of her religion.

I see the Earth as a gift from God to us and it is our obligation to be good stewards and take only what we need with no waste, so that it is sustainable for future generations. Drastically reducing our CO2 emissions is a huge part of this effort. I have three small grandsons and I wonder what will the natural resources be when they are my age?

Although her primary motivation may be the welfare of her grandchildren, she links her personal desire to protect them with a transpersonal value of working for the common good of future

generations, which is framed as a moral obligation under her religion. Thus, for Reeves, the parish sustainability initiative brings together personal interests related to family, environment, and religion.

Religious interests dominate the stories of the individuals who led sustainability initiatives in the monastic cases, but even in these cases, religion is intertwined with a variety of personal interests. Sister Barbara O'Donnell described the experience that inspired her to take up environmental work as a calling from God. In 1990, having retired at the end of a career in academic teaching and administration, she was on retreat, praying for guidance about what kind of work to take up as her next vocation. It was in this context that she awakened one morning to hear her own voice saying out loud, "Educate for the earth."

As with Reeves and those with pre-existing environmental interests, O'Donnell's sustainability work brought together interests related to personal relationships, environment, and religion. She had a long-standing sense of connection to nature and to the land at the Villa Maria convent. As a child, her mother had taught her to see God's hand in nature: "She used to hold blooming flowers between her cupped hands and say, 'Oh, God has made this.'" O'Donnell's sense of a connection between nature and spirituality was further nurtured by her extensive collection of nature-themed *mandalas*, images used to focus the mind for meditation. She also felt a special connection to the lands at Villa Maria, where she had spent several years as a novice. At the time of her novitiate, the order still had a large working farm and all novices were required to contribute their labor by gathering eggs from the commercial chicken houses. Throughout her career, O'Donnell had looked forward to retreats and opportunities to return to Villa Maria so developing a ministry focused on organic gardening, farm-based education, and eco-spirituality using the Villa lands was a delight for her. Furthermore, because her previous work had been in education, through schools owned by the sisters, the combination of environmental education and eco-spiritual ministry brought together multiple personal interests connected to faith and sustainability.

Although individuals with pre-existing environmental interests led thirteen of the fifteen initiatives in these case studies, there are two cases in which people of faith with no prior environmental background became sustainability champions once they became convinced that environmental issues were also faith issues. For Pastor Ken Wilson, of the Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor, that transition in perspective came in 2007, when he attended a retreat convened by

the Center for Health and the Global Environment (Harvard Medical School) and the National Association of Evangelicals. After various scientists described evidence for climate change and its predicted impacts on human beings, James Gustav (Gus) Speth, dean of the School of Forestry at Yale, spoke about why the scientists needed assistance from faith leaders. According to Wilson:

Gus Speth said words to this effect: Thirty years ago, I thought that with enough good science, we would be able to solve the environmental crisis. I was wrong. I used to think the greatest problems threatening the planet were pollution, biodiversity loss, and climate change. I was wrong there too. I now believe the greatest environmental problems are pride, apathy and greed. For that, I now see that we need a cultural and spiritual transformation. And we in the scientific community don't know how to do that. But you evangelicals do. We need your help.

Wilson described his personal response to Speth's words as a moment of spiritual awakening. "That's when it happened: the conviction of Holy Spirit. The tightening of the throat. The raising of the hair on my arms. The watering of the eyes. How could I have been so blind?"³ In that moment, Wilson realized that he had previously considered caring for the environment in passive terms and had not been actively engaged because he saw "environmentalists" as more concerned about spotted owls and wildlife than the social issues that were important to him. However, he now perceived the falsity of that presumed dichotomy. "What was I thinking? That if I cared less about polar bears or other endangered species, I'd somehow care more about the vulnerable unborn?" In response to his new conviction that care for the environment was not separate from his faith values, Wilson did further research on climate change and decided he needed to take action. He prepared a series of three sermons on Creation Care for his congregation, describing why Christians are obligated to be stewards of God's creation, the evidence for climate change, and the need for changes in human behavior.

In response to Wilson's sermons, one of his congregation members felt called to take action as well. Phil Brabbs approached the minister to ask what he could do to care for creation. Wilson suggested he organize a small group ministry at the church. Brabbs helped found Green Vineyard, a group that engaged in Bible study to explore the scriptural basis for creation care and undertook sustainability activities to put their beliefs into practice. Members of Green Vineyard worked to conserve resources at the church through energy efficiency, waste reduction,

³ The framing of Wilson's calling as a spiritual transformation accords with evangelical social norms. Evangelicals emphasize the possibility of dramatic changes in perspective that lead to new actions for individuals and faith communities.

recycling, and changes in supply purchases, and to promote conservation behavior in people's homes through distribution of CFLs and reusable shopping bags.

Both Brabbs and Wilson felt concerned about climate change because they were fathers who worried about the world their children would inherit, and yet neither took any significant interest in the topic until it was presented as an issue that required a faith-based response. Only after climate change was framed as a religious issue did both men experience a sense of being called to take action. A similar pattern is evident for Debbie O'Halloran, although she does not use the language of calling to describe the transformation of perspective that led her to promote a faith-based sustainability initiative.

O'Halloran is a life-long member of Trinity Presbyterian Church in East Brunswick, New Jersey. In 2006, she led a discernment group to consider what mission the church should focus on in the future. The environment, hunger, and peace-making were the three topics under consideration. Environment was on the list because the Presbyterian Church (USA) denomination had recommended its member congregations consider adopting it as a mission area, not because any member proposed it. O'Halloran had never been an active environmentalist and did not see why the subject was relevant, however, as she and her group researched the topic, her perspective changed. "When we started the discernment process, none of us were certain of why environment connected to our faith. No one voted for it as our mission focus at first." But they studied all three issues, breaking them down, looking at statistics and how people were affected by the issues, and at what a church could do in response. Much to her surprise, they found their perspectives changing as they became convinced that all other areas of ministry were intertwined with environmental issues.

By the end, we voted unanimously to choose environment as a mission. No one wanted to do anything unless we addressed environment first because it was connected with all the other issues, like feeding the hungry.

Like Wilson and Brabbs, O'Halloran was motivated to develop a sustainability initiative because she came to see responding to environmental issues as intertwined with fulfillment of her faith work, particularly in relation to Bible passages advocating love of neighbors and care for the poor. Although environment was not "on her radar" until they started the study groups, through that study she came to the conclusion that care for the environment is something Christians are called to do. O'Halloran's association of environment with social justice issues of poverty and hunger highlights the role community context played in shaping connections

between faith and sustainability. Interviewees described the religious bases for sustainability in terms of theological ideas associated with their community's pre-existing ministries. Hence, O'Halloran emphasized social justice, a long-standing focus for her Presbyterian church, whereas Wilson described a "religious duty to care for creation" that fit with evangelical emphases on personal behavior. The ways theology and ministry practices affected initiatives will be examined in more detail in the Faith Leader, Congregation, and Organization chapters.

3. PERSONAL WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY

Personal windows of opportunity added to some individuals' interest in taking action and enabled them to devote time and energy to environmental activities. A number of sustainability champions in these cases mentioned that they became leaders of their community initiatives at a time in their lives when they were looking for new projects. Debbie O'Halloran commented that she became involved in organizing her church's environmental mission because she was at a point in her life where, "I needed something and something presented itself."

My children had gone off to college and I was floundering. I went to the minister and told him I was looking for a project. Then I went to a Bread for the World⁴ presentation and felt that we needed to do something. That something ended up growing into this whole greening of the church. I never knew it would be this big. (O'Halloran)

Similarly, Gerard McGuire noted that his children were grown and out of the house and he was partially retired, which meant that he had time for greater involvement in activities at his church. Although much younger than O'Halloran or McGuire, Gretchen Marshall-Toth Fejel cited the need for a new project as part of her motivation for founding the Community Garden that has become a core activity for Green Vineyard. Because she had just been laid off from her job, she "had extra time and needed something positive to do."

Unlike Marshall-Toth Fejel, the majority of the sustainability champions in the non-monastic faith communities were in their fifties or older. For many of them, retirement created the window of opportunity for becoming more involved in activities at their churches and synagogues. In several cases, retired couples volunteered in their faith communities, where they might both work on a project related to a shared interest such as gardening, or serve on separate committees that made use of skills from their previous careers.

⁴ Bread for the World is a Christian citizens' movement in the United States that advocates for policy changes to reduce hunger and poverty. (<http://www.bread.org/what-we-do/>)

Windows of opportunity were also a theme in the stories of Fr. Paul Schwietz, Sr. Ginny Jones, and Sr. Barbara O'Donnell, however, in these cases, the timing had to do with opportunities to develop careers rather than availability of free time outside of work and family. Shortly after joining the monastic community, Schwietz established a career path at Saint John's Abbey by applying his training in biology and forestry to the new position of land manager. Jones first took up care of the prairie fen that would become Bow in the Clouds Preserve by using it as an educational resource when she began teaching at Nazareth College. Later, after a career in both teaching and hospital administration, she founded a new ministry for her convent with programs on eco-spirituality; this new ministry coincided with a new career in retreat leadership. O'Donnell was motivated to learn how to "educate for the earth" when she sought a new ministry after retiring from her previous career in administrative work. Like Jones, she developed an outdoor activity, in this case focused on organic gardening, which led to a new ministry career coordinating eco-spirituality retreats and environmental education programs. Thus, in these monastic communities, the individuals who championed sustainability did so during windows of opportunity related to their careers, in which they were able to incorporate environmental activities into jobs within their faith organizations.

EFFECTS: COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

The preceding section described the diverse personal and religious interests that motivated interviewees' efforts to organize and implement sustainability initiatives. Some of these interests centered on personal concerns for family, local environments, and careers, which were linked to wider environmental and religious interests. For individuals with strong connections to their faith traditions, developing a conviction that environmental issues are faith issues was a key factor in motivating them to take action through the venue of a faith community. Lynn Cameron, a long-time environmentalist, illustrates this experience in her description of the Earth Care House Church as a place where her calling to religious life and calling to care for the earth intertwined and "the two threads of my life came together."

For the individuals who led these initiatives, promoting sustainability through their faith communities was an opportunity to address intertwined personal interests related to both environment and faith. Consequently, they brought a deep personal commitment to their sustainability work, which is evident in their investment of considerable time, effort, and

creativity. For some champions, that commitment was augmented by a window of opportunity in their personal lives, which meant they were ready to take on new projects. An indication of the level of commitment is apparent in the willingness of these champions to seek external resources in order to fulfill their goals when personal knowledge proved insufficient. Individuals enrolled their faith communities in green certification programs to acquire structure and informational resources, enlisted aid from local experts to set up gardens or install solar panels, consulted professionals to learn about prairie restoration and sustainable forest management, attended workshops on organic farming and storm window construction, researched recycling and office supply options, and learned to write grant applications in order to fund projects.⁵ Even the two leaders who were professional environmental educators had to acquire information about best practices and available resources that would fit their religious organizations. Thus, a key factor affecting the success of these initiatives was the presence of champions with a deep sense of commitment to earth care who were willing to do research and develop new skills in order to implement activities that would address their intertwined environmental and faith interests.

⁵ Individuals' responses to the challenge posed by insufficient knowledge are described in more detail in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7

INDIVIDUALS Leaders Who Make Things Happen

See, that's the thing, things happened because someone has an idea and is passionate and is able to bring others along. They are able to show how it fits with the mission of the community. A lot of it comes from individuals.

Tom Matthews, Madison Christian Community

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter identified personal interests that inspired individuals with a sense of commitment to faith-based earth care. Commitment alone, however, does not guarantee that a person can effectively develop a project, especially if the project requires managing a group of people and navigating the processes that govern an organization. This chapter examines characteristics that enabled individuals to be effective initiative leaders. It also describes challenges sustainability champions faced and explores factors from other domains of activity that helped them respond to those challenges. The chapter ends with reflections on the rewards individuals experienced through their work as leaders and participants engaged in faith-based earth care.

LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

Interviewees across the cases cited the presence of dedicated individuals who were able to provide leadership as a significant factor contributing to the accomplishments of their sustainability initiatives. Tom Matthews, the maintenance person for the Madison Christian Community, attributed the success of the sustainability activities in his faith community to people he called “spark plugs,” who get things started and keep them going. These spark plugs inspired others because they had ideas and passion and, perhaps most important, the leadership skills to bring others along as they turned those ideas into actions. Chuck Tully, Facilities Manager for St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, also commented on the importance of leadership for

getting enough people involved to make it possible for an initiative to be successful. He had noticed that levels of volunteer participation were higher in the presence of strong leaders because “people recognize their leadership and are interested in working with them.” Similarly, at Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, one of the Green Team members asserted that the whole temple was supportive of the idea to seek GreenFaith certification, however what made it possible for that idea to become reality was having an effective leader in Mike Chodroff: “It was his baby, but he delegated well, and we are proud of him” (Cohen).

The comment about Chodroff’s ability to delegate reinforces Matthews’ and Tully’s observations that leadership was not simply a matter of doing all the work oneself, it involved the ability to work with others in a range of situations. Comparing the cases suggests that the individuals who led these faith-community sustainability initiatives shared three characteristics that contributed to their leadership capacity (see Table 7.1). First, many of the initiative leaders were knowledgeable about environmental issues and sustainability. Second, most of the individuals exhibited leadership skills derived from prior experience working for the religious organization. Third, nearly all were long-time members who were embedded in their communities, which positioned them to assume leadership roles.

Table 7.1 Characteristics that Contributed to Leadership Capacity

Enabling Characteristics	Number of Cases
1. Sustainability Knowledge	8
2. Leadership Skills	
• Organizational experience	14
• Project Management	15
3. Embedded in the Community	15
• Trust	
• Relationships/networks	

1. SUSTAINABILITY KNOWLEDGE

Eight of the individuals who led initiatives in their faith communities were knowledgeable about sustainability due to personal backgrounds in environmental work. Five initiatives emerged because of community members who started activities related to their environmental interests. Training in biology and forestry provided knowledge that enabled Sr. Ginny Jones and Fr. Paul Schwietz to implement land restoration projects in monastic communities and experience with environmental organizations like the Sierra Club and Al Gore’s Climate Project assisted Lynn Cameron and Gerard McGuire in organizing groups to take

up faith-based sustainability activities in their churches. Individuals with environmental knowledge were also recruited and asked to implement sustainability initiatives in cases for which a leadership board or a community discernment process had adopted a sustainability ethic. Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple and Temple Shalom both enlisted environmental educators to lead their green certification processes and the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia turned to Sr. Corrine Wright, an educator with a degree in biology, to manage implementation of their Environmental Initiative. Thus, environmental knowledge enabled some individuals to lead specific activities and helped others develop plans for making their communities more sustainable. Moreover, because of their academic training, careers in environmental education, and experience with environmental organizations, faith community members perceived these individuals as knowledgeable about sustainability and trusted them to lead initiatives.

2. LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Although experience with environmental organizations conferred authority for leading sustainability initiatives, when interviewees described factors that contributed to the successful development of their earth care efforts, they focused on leadership skills that were well suited to the context of their religious organization. Comparing the cases suggests that leadership, in the context of a faith community, was enhanced by two sets of leadership skills: 1) institutional knowledge, which facilitated the process of taking action through the venue of a religious organization, and 2) project management skills, which enabled champions to organize projects and people.

Institutional Knowledge

In fourteen cases, the sustainability initiative leaders had prior experience serving on committees, which gave them “institutional knowledge,” practical knowledge about how the religious organization was structured and how to manage groups in accord with organizational social norms. When Trinity Presbyterian Church in New Brunswick engaged in a discernment process to update the church’s mission foci, Debbie O’Halloran led a three-month study exploring hunger, peace-making, and environment as potential mission topics. Drawing on her past experience with Bible study groups, she ran the discernment process like a Bible study class, a format that was familiar to members and provided an effective process through which a core

group could explore ideas and present information to the wider community. The group read denominational reports and information from the internet, discussed what they had learned and how it connected with their faith, and then “sat with it” to reflect. At the end of this process, the study group took a vote and unanimously elected environment as a mission area because they had become convinced that neither hunger alleviation nor peace could be achieved without also addressing environmental issues. O’Halloran then made a presentation to the Session, the elected board of elders that governs the church, to explain what the discernment committee had learned and why it was recommending adoption of environment as a church mission.

As the Trinity example demonstrates, institutional knowledge was not simply a matter of knowing how to lead a meeting, it also included knowledge of how to appropriately introduce sustainability as a topic for the community’s consideration and how to work through organizational structures to foster community engagement with earth care as a faith issue. Most of the individuals leading the initiatives in these cases were able to draw on prior experiences as volunteers or employees within their faith communities for institutional knowledge that enabled them to be effective sustainability champions. O’Halloran was familiar with Bible study class social norms and congregational governance systems because she was a life-long member of Trinity Presbyterian Church. Like her mother before her, she was an active participant in the community who volunteered to serve on committees. These characteristics of long-term membership and prior committee service were also evident among initiative leaders in other faith communities. Mike Chodroff, a life-long member of Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, was serving on the Board of Trustees when he took up the task of coordinating the temple’s GreenFaith certification process. Erin Stack, who organized the community garden for First Parish Church of Newbury was a long-time member and served as a deacon (lay minister) for the congregation. Several of the sustainability champions had experience as volunteers in religious education programs. In the monastic cases, sustainability champions drew on experiences in community planning committee work as well as management experience from previous administrative work at schools, hospitals, and parishes run by their faith communities.

With the exception of Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor, all of the initiatives were led by individuals who were long-term members with a history of community service that provided them with practical institutional knowledge. They were familiar with normative processes for organizing small groups to accomplish projects and governance systems for making decisions.

This institutional knowledge not only equipped sustainability champions with knowledge about how to lead meetings and planning processes, it also enabled them to engage with the wider congregation and integrate sustainability activities into organizational structures. Thus, individual champions' institutional knowledge is an enabling factor that intersects with factors in the Congregation and Organization domains, and will be discussed in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

Project Management

In each faith community, interviewees noted the importance of having people with leadership skills for the successful implementation of their projects. The leadership abilities they mentioned included two skill sets that assisted with management of the projects through which the initiatives were carried out. First, project planning required meeting management skills such as setting agendas, taking notes, and keeping track of progress toward completion of proposed activities; these meeting management skills were enacted in accord with organizational norms, as described in the discussion of institutional knowledge. The second skill set that contributed to project management had to do with coordination and effective use of volunteers. Among the fifteen cases, individuals' project management skills were important factors in holding the initiatives together and moving them forward.

Individuals gained meeting management skills from previous experiences within the faith organization as well as experiences in outside organizations. As noted above, most of the champions leading these sustainability initiatives were familiar with their faith community's normative group processes because of previous volunteer committee service. These group norms included meeting management practices such as use of agendas and note-taking as well as processes for setting committee goals, planning actions, and allocating project implementation to specific groups of people. Sustainability champions in the monastic communities also drew on management experience from previous administrative work at schools, hospitals, and parishes run by their faith communities. In addition to skills learned through faith organizations, individuals drew on project management skills from other venues such as prior participation in Sierra Club campaigns or Al Gore's Climate Project. One initiative leader had a long history of advocacy work for LGBT rights, which provided insights into group management and advocacy strategies that could be used to build community support for sustainability.

In addition to the meeting management skills through which individuals organized their Green Teams to plan initiatives, sustainability champions developed creative approaches to coordinating volunteers, which assisted with implementation of initiatives. Garden projects offer a good example of the combination of personal commitment and volunteer coordination that enabled these champions to be effective project managers. Garden maintenance requires steady work over a long period of time and most of that time commitment is during the summer when attendance in religious organizations is low and variable. The need for workers to assist with watering and harvesting is highest in late summer when people are most likely to be out of town for vacation. The productive community gardens in these case studies all had a few dedicated project leaders who took responsibility for handling planning and regular maintenance throughout the growing season. In addition to their own labor, what made it possible for these leaders to nurture large-scale gardens was skillful management strategies that allowed a large number of people to contribute according to their capacity. Margo Wolfson ascribed the success of the community garden at Temple Shalom to Lenore Robinson's management skills.

Lenore is passionate about [the garden]. When she speaks to people, she is able to get them involved. She uses an email list of volunteers and gets them all organized. There are people who don't want to be on a committee but will come and dig in the dirt. There are some who come just for planting in the spring or just to help with harvest in the fall.

By creating a system in which volunteers were able to contribute brief periods of labor, Robinson made it possible for people to share in the gardening project in ways that fit their schedules and personal capacities.

At Madison Christian Community, leaders of various garden projects also developed management techniques to make it easier for volunteers to participate even if they had limited time. Pastor Wild described the importance of leaders like Jean Einerson, who coordinates the upper garden at the church: "She is a clear communicator and she thanks people—it makes working in the garden enjoyable, which attracts more people, so there is a core group now." One of the methods Einerson used to make it possible for diverse community members to share in the garden work was to post lists of tasks on a white board on the edge of the garden where they are available to anyone dropping by with some spare time and a desire to pitch in. Kim Eighmy, who coordinates the Kids in the Garden project, said she recognized that community members were busy and she felt a need to honor the time commitment they made when they chose to volunteer by ensuring that they had a positive experience. To that end, she took responsibility for

managing some of the challenges inherent in a project that intermingles people from different age and cultural groups. During the summer, Kids in the Garden brings children from a neighborhood community center to the church for a program in which they learn about caring for plants and preparing healthy snacks. The children work closely with adult volunteers from the church. Eighmy developed creative methods for calming rambunctious children so volunteers would not feel overwhelmed. One method that proved especially effective was photography: the children loved to have their pictures taken and would settle down to pose for the camera. Eighmy also intervened when she found that her volunteers were distressed because a few members of the staff from the neighborhood center spoke disparagingly about the children in their care. Eighmy worked with the center leadership to improve staff training so there was a better understanding of behavioral expectations for members of the two organizations.

3. EMBEDDED IN THE COMMUNITY

The previous committee experiences that contributed to leadership capabilities are indicative of another characteristic shared by the individuals who developed these initiatives: they were embedded in their faith communities. As long-term members who participated in worship, education, and community service, they had extensive personal relationships with other members of their religious organizations. Consequently, organizational leaders and members were familiar with the individuals' interests and abilities and trusted them to organize initiatives. Furthermore, these personal relationships enhanced individuals' ability to recruit participants and build support for the initiatives across diverse areas of the religious organizations. Thus, embeddedness helped champions create initiatives and integrate them into the community.

Trust

As long-term members and active volunteers, the individuals who organized these initiatives were known and trusted members of their communities. Scholarship focused on collaborative processes has identified trust as a significant factor because it contributes to peoples' willingness to try new practices and facilitates development of interpersonal relationships that are essential for viable collaborations (Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000). Similarly, in these faith communities, trust was a factor that contributed to champions' abilities to gain support from community leaders and congregations when they proposed the idea to

develop an initiative and for the interpersonal relationships that affected levels of participation by the wider community. For example, at Anshe Emeth, the board and rabbis made the decision to enroll in GreenFaith before consulting the congregation; once informed, the congregation was supportive because they knew and trusted Mike Chodroff, the leader of the project. According to Asher Siebert, a member of the Green Team, “This is a large but close-knit congregation. They knew this [sustainability] was Mike’s thing and had faith in us to create this program.”

Networks of Community Relationships

In addition to trust, being embedded in their faith communities meant that sustainability champions could draw on networks of community relationships to facilitate development and implementation of initiatives. Those relationships played a role in forming Green Teams and building support networks to implement sustainability initiatives.

Personal relationships played a significant role in formation of Green Teams. For initiatives that began in response to individuals’ concerns, the discovery of shared concern for environmental issues often led people to form environmental affinity groups. At Trinity Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg, the founding members of the Earth Care House Church developed a shared interest in exploring connections between their faith and environmental concerns while participating in a retreat together. Similarly, at the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation, the Environmental Task Force originated when a few congregation members organized a group of people with a common desire to explore environmental issues from a Jewish perspective. For cases with a vision for a community-wide initiative, Green Team formation often began with recruitment of people known to be concerned about the environment. For example, at St. Thomas Aquinas, McGuire had been active as a volunteer in the parish in the past and was able to organize a parish Green Committee by contacting people on the Human Concerns Committee¹ who he already knew had an interest in environmental issues.

Previous service to the faith community also enabled members of Green Teams to implement sustainability initiatives. At Anshe Emeth, Chodroff was on the Board of Trustees when he began organizing the temple’s green certification process, which facilitated his ability to coordinate with temple leadership: he was able to interact with the rabbis regularly and worked

¹ The Human Concerns Committee focuses on alleviating hunger, homelessness, and disease, and addressing deficiencies in housing and health care.

with them to integrate the green certification process into the religious and educational programming at the temple. Because previous service in the temple meant that Chodroff knew people on various committees, he was able to enlist support from committee leaders, who organized their own activities as part of the community greening initiative. The Anshe Emeth Green Team also benefited from inclusion of a member of the office staff, which made it easier to communicate with the wider congregation by getting articles into the newsletter and placing information on the temple website. In addition to relationships based on community service, personal ties facilitated initiative implementation across areas of the faith communities. At Temple Shalom, Wolfson's husband was chair of the Facilities Committee during the period in which they worked toward GreenFaith certification, and his committee undertook a number of projects that contributed to the greening process. At Trinity Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg, friendships between Pastor Held's family and the Cameron family increased opportunities for communication between the community's faith leader and the Earth Care House Church.

Thus, networks of relationships among individuals aided formation of Green Teams and created opportunities for cooperation between Green Teams and other units within a faith community. The role of these relationships conforms to scholarship on social capital, in which networks facilitate co-operation within or among groups (Keeley 2007). Through these networks, the champions enlisted support from other members of the community, thereby facilitating the process of integrating sustainability into multiple areas of the religious organization. The influence of these networks of community relationships draws attention to the significance of the congregation and the organizational structures as factors shaping development of initiatives, topics that will be examined in more detail in Chapters 10-13.

The relationship networks and trust that arose from being embedded in the community were closely intertwined with leadership capabilities of institutional knowledge and project management skills. The importance of both embeddedness and leadership capabilities as complementary factors that enabled individuals to be effective sustainability champions may be illustrated with the example of one individual who developed these personal resources *after* founding an environmental activity. When Gretchen Marshall-Toth Fejel proposed creation of a community garden on the grounds of Vineyard Church, Ann Arbor, she was a young, devout woman with a deep personal interest in organic gardening and a recent job loss that opened a

window of opportunity in which she was ready to take on a new challenge. Thus, she brought commitment, time, and energy to the project. However she had little prior experience with gardening and, because she was not a long-time volunteer in her church, she lacked institutional knowledge or networks of relationships within the religious organization. Given her youth and unproven abilities, she expressed surprise that the pastors supported her proposal to start a food pantry garden. “[Pastors] Ken and Nancy just trusted this twenty-two year old with the backyard of the church! We discussed practical issues, like leaving enough distance between the garden and the children’s education areas, and they said, ‘Okay, go ahead.’”

The subsequent evolution of the garden project illustrates the importance of relationship networks, institutional knowledge, and project managements skills as factors that affected an individual’s ability to lead an initiative. Marshall-Toth Fejel, like so many other sustainability champions in these cases, was committed to the project because of her personal interests. She sought out people with expertise who could help set up the garden, however those supporters soon moved out of town and it was difficult to recruit a stable volunteer work force during that first summer. Her ability to engage people in the garden project improved in subsequent years as she began building networks of relationships and connecting the garden to other areas of the religious organization. She worked with the music minister to include biannual spring and harvest prayers in Sunday services and became involved with the membership classes for new members of the church.

Recently, I started helping in the kitchen during the membership class. It turned out to be a good way to get conversation started, to let new people know about the garden. The produce goes to the kitchen and when it is served, people are told, ‘This was grown in our garden.’

Integrating the garden into services and membership classes embedded the project in the organization and made it more visible. Visibility also increased as Marshall-Toth Fejel built personal connections with other members of the church, such as a woman on the prayer ministry team who helps in the garden.

I wanted her opinion on the prayer garden I am trying to get started. It will be a quiet area with native plants. She walked around the area and said, “I’m getting Jesus bumps; whatever you have been doing here is awesome.” She started telling others about that space and other people have begun to come spend time there because of the word of mouth.

In addition to benefits from a growing network of relationships and integration with areas of the organization, the Garden Ministry benefited from Marshall-Toth Fejel’s development of

creative project management skills. Although the primary purpose of the garden is to provide produce for the local foodbank, she tried to find ways to make the gardening experience rewarding for volunteers so they would enjoy themselves and wish to continue.

Last year I created some designated beds with greens, radishes, spinach—things that grow quickly. These were not for donation; they are not things the food bank wants. They were for the volunteers. I thought it would help if they got some tangible reward for their work, something that can be harvested early. Before last year, we focused more on the goal of donating to the food bank, but I was hoping to create more of a connection to the idea of food for the volunteers. The garden is also used for our summer camp. We have cooking and gardening projects for the kids. They harvest carrots and make muffins.

These examples indicate that although Gretchen Marshall-Toth Fejel did not begin her leadership of the Garden Ministry with all the advantages that made older champions trusted, effective initiative leaders, she soon developed a similar suite of leadership capabilities, while also forming relationships that embedded her in the community. Increased embeddedness and leadership skills, combined with deep personal commitment, were enabling factors that facilitated her ability to manage the garden successfully.

SUSTAINING INITIATIVES: INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGES & RESPONSES

All of the interviewees were asked about the kinds of challenges that they had encountered in developing their sustainability initiatives. Their responses described a variety of issues related to communication and levels of support within their communities and access to resources (funds, volunteers and knowledge) that affected their capacity to implement and sustain activities. Several of these challenges intersected with factors in Faith Leaders, Congregation, and Organization domains, and will be discussed in subsequent chapters. This section examines challenges that affected individuals personally, thereby making it more difficult for them to develop, implement, and sustain initiatives in their faith communities.

The personal challenges that individuals described can be divided into three categories: knowledge deficits, emotional challenges, and changes of personnel (see Table 7.2). Knowledge deficits posed a challenge for implementing initiative goals in several cases. Interviewees indicated that they began with a desire to make their congregations more sustainable but often had no real idea of what to do. Burnout, often accompanied by despair over the magnitude of environmental crises, was the most frequently cited emotional challenge. A few individuals also mentioned frustrations with perceived lack of support from clergy or committee leaders in their

faith communities. Changes in personnel due to job changes, health problems, or the need to care for family members, affected some cases. Loss of Green Team members could increase the workload and hasten burnout for those who remained on a downsized team. In a few communities, changes in staff and faith leadership created challenges by reducing administrative support for sustainability or shifting the dynamics of interpersonal relationships as new employees replaced initiative founders.

Table 7.2 Challenges that Affected Individuals

Challenges	Cases citing issue
1. Knowledge Deficits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to enact a specific activity (e.g. garden) • How to connect sustainability w/ spiritual praxis • How to make the organization more sustainably 	7 2 3
2. Emotional Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burn-out • Lack of interest from faith community • Despair at magnitude of environmental crises 	6 3 4
3. Personnel Changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of Green Team leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Succession concerns • Changes in clergy • Changes in staff 	4 12 2 1

1. KNOWLEDGE DEFICITS

Translating a general desire to live more sustainably into a sustainability initiative that will affect individual and collective behavior not only requires motivation to act, it also requires knowledge about *how* to make the organization more sustainable. Environmental psychology researchers describe “procedural knowledge,” knowledge about how to take action, as a significant factor that determines whether an individual will actually engage in behaviors that address personal interests in caring for the environment (Ajzen 1991, Stern 2005). Interviewees mentioned that they faced challenges early in the process of developing their faith-based initiatives because they were uncertain about how to integrate sustainability into their faith communities. Individuals described problems due to lack of knowledge about how to undertake specific environmental activities, how to connect sustainability with spiritual practices, and how to make their religious organizations more sustainable.

Sister Barbara O’Donnell felt called to “educate for the earth” but no such ministry existed in her religious order and she was not certain what kind of work she could do to fulfill

her calling while also contributing to her community. At the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation, the newly formed Environmental Task Force wanted to explore connections between faith and sustainability but the lay group was not sure how they could connect concern for the environment with their community's spiritual practices. At Trinity Presbyterian Church in East Brunswick, the congregational discernment process had identified stewardship of creation as a core mission area, but the leaders of the Earth Shepherd team that formed to implement this mission realized that they were not certain what actions to take. At First Universalist Church of Rockland, the Earth Care Team, which had been founded in response to a Maine Council of Churches' campaign to promote legislative support for the Kyoto Protocol, was no longer content to write occasional letters to senators and encourage congregation members to use CFLs but was not sure how to step up their level of activity.

In these four cases, individuals and affinity groups were uncertain how to shift from personal study and small group activities to community-level action. They were able to overcome these challenges when they found resources that provided ideas and guidance for potential paths forward. Sister Barbara O'Donnell returned to Villa Maria, the motherhouse of her order (the Sisters of the Humility of Mary), where she discussed her calling to educate for the earth with members of the community's leadership team. They were sympathetic but also thought it would be best if she took a job through one of the existing organizations run by the order which would guarantee her a salary. Because O'Donnell's sense of being called was so strong, she persisted in seeking a way to fulfill her mission to educate for the earth. With assistance from the convent librarian, she began to study the history of the order, which had once farmed its lands, and spoke to the land manager, Frank Romeo, to learn more about the land. Romeo became her teacher and partner, sharing his first-hand knowledge of the convent's past and present land management and guiding O'Donnell in her efforts to start an organic garden. Both the garden and O'Donnell's passion for learning about how to grow food flourished; she went on to take courses in permaculture and environmental education and brought her new knowledge back to Villa Maria where she and Romeo gradually created programs in environmental education and eco-spirituality. Those programs developed into Evergreen, a new environmental ministry for the Villa Maria Retreat Center, with O'Donnell as program coordinator. Alongside the new spiritual programs, the garden project became an opportunity for

Romeo to bring the convent's 300 acres of farmland back into production, raising food for charity and providing a context for farm-based environmental education for children.

Like O'Donnell, the members of the Environmental Task Force at the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation were uncertain how to integrate their exploration of connections between religion and sustainability into the structure of their faith community. They asked their rabbi for help. Rabbi Rosen suggested that they could start organizing an annual Tu B'Shevat service for the congregation, thereby connecting environmental concerns to one of the regular observances in the Jewish liturgical cycle, the calendar of religious celebrations. He also helped his congregants contact Rabbi Fred Dobbs, a leader in the American Jewish environmental movement, who could assist them in developing their first Tu B'Shevat program. Through this program, the Task Force was able to integrate sustainability into the spiritual practices of their faith community and share their conviction that Judaism includes an environmental ethic.

For Trinity Presbyterian Church in East Brunswick and First Universalist Church of Rockland, the knowledge deficit had less to do with making connections to spiritual practices than with figuring out how to develop a community-wide sustainability initiative. Debbie O'Halloran, who led the creation of Trinity's Earth Shepherds program, had a background in nursing and secretarial work but no prior experience with environmental activity. However, she had become convinced that Christians have a responsibility to care for God's creation and, "Once you believe in something, you find a way to make it happen." After trying some basic projects like teaching the congregation members about recycling, the Trinity Earth Shepherds realized their committee was not educated enough about sustainability to educate the congregation. They reached out to GreenFaith, an interfaith organization that promotes resource conservation in congregations. O'Halloran went through the GreenFaith Fellow training to gain knowledge about faith-based sustainability, and the church enrolled in the GreenFaith Certification program. Similarly, after working on small projects like selling CFLs to congregation members and writing letters to encourage Maine politicians to support US endorsement of the Kyoto Protocol, the leaders of the Earth Care Team at First Universalist Church of Rockland decided to step up their sustainability efforts by enrolling in the Unitarian Universalist Association's Green Sanctuary Certification program. These green certification programs provided procedural knowledge in the form of frameworks with which to define goals,

requirements for actions in all areas of congregational activity, examples of potential actions, and metrics for assessing progress.

Lack of knowledge about how to develop and implement a sustainability initiative often required that individuals seek information from experts outside of the faith context. Even following through on one specific project might require assistance if the community decided to focus on an activity for which no members had sufficient prior experience. At Holy Wisdom Monastery, the sisters decided that they would restore their farmland to prairie as part of their newly articulated mission to care for the earth, only to realize that neither they nor their staff members knew how to go about restoring a prairie. Fortunately, the monastery land manager rose to the challenge. He shadowed a ranger at the state park near the monastery to learn about prairie restoration techniques, then shared his new knowledge with the sisters and groups of volunteers who assisted with annual prairie project work days. At First Parish Church of Newbury, the community decided to plant a garden to implement their mission to be “stewards of earth,” but they had little knowledge of the work required and, since most people left for the summer, the neglected garden failed to produce. The following year, deacon Erin Stack took the lead in organizing a renewed garden. She sought out garden experts from the wider community to learn about organic gardening and organized speakers to give presentations at the church so that those who participated in the church’s community garden would be equipped to care for their plots of land. In both of these examples, an individual from the faith community took the lead and acquired procedural knowledge in order to implement activities undertaken as part of a community-wide sustainability initiative.

In all of the cases described above, the champions who were committed to making their faith communities more sustainable sought out resources to help them address knowledge deficits. Thus, willingness to seek new knowledge, as needed, was another personal characteristic that enabled these individuals to be effective initiative leaders. The accompanying enabling factor was availability of resources that made it possible for these individuals to develop initiatives and implement specific activities despite their prior lack of knowledge.

2. EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES

Several interviewees mentioned emotional challenges that made it difficult to persevere with sustainability activities over time. Burnout, a perceived lack of interest from the faith

community, and despair over environmental crises were closely intertwined issues that affected individuals in several of the cases.

Burnout

Six interviewees mentioned burnout as a personal challenge. Several individuals who led faith communities through certification processes found themselves worn out by the end of the process. Asked whether Temple Shalom would continue to engage in environmental activities now that they had completed their GreenFaith certification, Margo Wolfson said there would be a hiatus because she did not have time to organize new activities.

I dropped the ball this year. I have two jobs so I don't have much time and I just felt that it takes lots of energy—more than I have right now. Like for the Water Certification, I wanted to do that and I gave a presentation but there was such a lack of enthusiasm that I figured we just needed a break.

Wolfson's comments indicate that several, intertwined factors contributed to her burnout: she worked too many hours and low levels of participation by the Congregation undermined her intention to continue. The heavy workload was the result of problems with Green Team recruitment. The team that took on the task of planning the activities for the GreenFaith Certification process at Temple Shalom included people who were required to participate because they represented committees that had to contribute in order to meet program mandates. Several committee members who lacked personal environmental interests soon dropped out, leaving Wolfson, as coordinator of the process, to shoulder much of the burden for organizing projects and writing up reports for the certification application. Since Wolfson also worked full time and assisted with the temple's religious education program, it is not surprising that the certification process left her feeling worn out.

Wolfson's burnout was further exacerbated by the perceived lack of interest from many members of her congregation, a second emotional challenge mentioned by interviewees. She did not blame people for their disinterest, since she considered it natural that some people had other concerns and felt that "parents are pushed so many ways these days, they just don't have time" to participate in extra events at the temple. Nevertheless, knowing that there was little community interest in participating in environmental activities, she could not muster enthusiasm for taking on any new tasks after completing the certification process.

Lack of Critical Mass

The challenges posed by burnout and lack of interest were closely tied to participant numbers as a factor that affected the durability of sustainability initiatives. In communities where sustainability groups were larger and better established, members could share the workload and take breaks to avoid burnout. Malcolm Cameron mentioned that he had periodically taken a year off from participating in the Earth Care House Church at Trinity Presbyterian Church. He felt comfortable taking breaks because, in a group that had between twelve and sixteen members each year and regularly rotated leadership among those members, he could be confident the work would continue even if he was not there. Thus, achieving a “critical mass” of Green Team members seems to have been a factor that sustained initiatives over time for several reasons. First, it reduced the workload for individuals and distributed responsibility for maintaining the sustainability initiative across a larger group, which prevented burnout. Second, the larger group made it possible for individuals to take restorative breaks when they felt burnout might be imminent. Third, a high level of participation by community members gave the Green Team members a sense that their concerns were shared by a significant portion of their community, which bolstered their enthusiasm for persevering with the initiative. Levels of participation by congregation members, which determined whether a Green Team reached critical mass, were affected by factors in Faith Leader and Congregation domains and will be discussed further in the next two chapters.

Despair at Magnitude of Environmental Problems

A third emotional challenge, which is closely linked to the problem of burnout, arose from the despair individuals felt in the face of overwhelming environmental crises. Malcolm Cameron cited “despair; not becoming discouraged” as his core challenge and one reason he periodically took a year off from participating in the house church. Frank Mundo, at First Universalist Church of Rockland, also spoke of his struggle with despair over the magnitude of environmental crises: “We were anguishing over the environment, over how it’s going down the toilet... The situation is so terrible and I felt so hopeless. But we’re trying to do something.”

Individuals described a range of ways to alleviate despair and find the strength to take action in spite of feeling overwhelmed by environmental issues. Religion provided one

significant resource for counteracting despair. Lynn Cameron cited a key pastoral message that helped members of the Earth Care House Church.

[Rev.] Ann has a saying, “God calls us to be faithful, not successful.” We just have to try. Even if it does not work out, at least we’ve tried. The resolution against coal power was like that. We thought, “We’re just a little house church, we can’t do much.” But, we don’t want to just do little things like picking up litter from the side of the highway. There are big problems like acid rain and air quality so we thought we should try. And it worked. That taught us that it’s okay to try for big things.

Members of Trinity Presbyterian Church drew on Rev. Held’s message for courage to attempt actions that seemed beyond their reach, taking comfort in the idea that their efforts would have value even if the results were uncertain.

Sister Ginny Jones also shared a spiritual message that she draws on for inspiration when environmental crises seem too big to be addressed by individual actions. She recounted a story from Joan Chittister, a Benedictine nun and author. In the story, travelers encounter a small bird lying on its back with its feet in the air so they stop to find out what the bird is doing. The bird tells them it has heard that the sky is falling and they laugh, asking if the tiny creature really thinks it can hold up the entire sky. The bird responds, “One does what one can.” Sr. Ginny often tells this charming tale to students to convey a message that is very similar to Rev. Held’s: even if individual contributions seem too small to affect a crisis like climate change, it is still important to do the best one can. In her own life, she too does “what she can.”

In addition to messages affirming the spiritual value of their work, religious practices enabled some individuals to avoid despair.

Here is another thing about being faith-based: there is this reminder that this is God’s creation. So we take time to celebrate it, to enjoy it. You can’t be frantically fighting all the time. We want to be hopeful. The worship and the hymns, the scriptures, they help us to be hopeful. The Sierra Club likes to take people on outings, to connect them to nature and show them what they are preserving but that is not the same as thanking God and realizing that you are related to all of creation. (Cameron)

Approaching sustainability through the context of religion created a celebratory, reverent attitude toward nature that helped individuals persevere.

A second antidote to despair was the fellowship that emerged out of participating in a faith community. The Earth Care House Church took time at the beginning of its meetings to ask each member about how their lives were going. People might talk about particular environmental issues that worried them and, even if the problem was something the group cannot solve, there was benefit in knowing that others understood and sympathized. Frank Mundo described a

similar fellowship resource at First Universalist where he helped organize a chalice circle, a small group for spiritual development, with an environmental theme.

The Green Chalice Circle started after a group of us got together at a church retreat.... We wanted to form a group, not to do any specific activity but to be mutually supportive of our concerns.... We read books like Bill McKibben's and we discussed them. After a while I stopped doing the reading because it was too depressing but I still went to the meetings.

Even though Mundo found the readings depressing, he continued to attend meetings because the group fellowship was an important counterpoint to his anguish.

A third method for reducing despair, and the solution that finally made the greatest difference for Mundo, was to take meaningful action. He was depressed because he was deeply concerned about climate change and did not perceive supporting local food or encouraging politicians to enact new policies as actions that would have adequate or immediate effects on greenhouse gas emissions. However, he became involved in a project to build storm window inserts for his church, to reduce heat loss through the basement windows, and that project became the basis for establishing the WindowDressers, a nonprofit organization working with congregations to provide window inserts for churches and homes in several towns. As the project expanded, Mundo became more hopeful because he was doing something that would directly reduce energy use in Maine, thereby having an immediate impact on greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, the results were readily apparent in the completed window inserts and reduced energy bills: "This is something that is physical, direct, and personal. You have control over it; you're not asking someone else [i.e. politicians] to do something for you at some point in the future."

Faith, fellowship, and meaningful work, the solutions to despair cited by these individuals, may also be described as enabling factors that enhanced individuals' abilities to undertake and sustain environmental activities. Religious messages that affirmed the moral value of taking action, even if the actions were imperfect or too small to solve large-scale environmental crises, provided impetus for individuals to overcome their feelings of being overwhelmed and begin to "do something" by organizing environmental activities. Fellowship with like-minded members of their faith communities helped individuals persevere with their efforts and kept them involved even when they were frustrated by the inadequacy of the actions available. Finally, meaningful work, in the form of projects that addressed personal environmental and faith interests, gave individuals a sense of efficacy that motivated them to continue their efforts.

3. PERSONNEL CHANGES

Changes in personnel created challenges for individuals in several of the sustainability initiatives either by jeopardizing the viability of the Green Team or affecting initiative support from other areas of the religious organization. Green Team viability was affected by loss of leaders and member attrition, both of which usually resulted from transitions in individuals' lives and reinforce the importance of "stage of life" as a factor that influenced initiatives. Changes in clergy or staff affected networks of personal relationships within faith communities, which led to shifts in social dynamics within groups carrying out environmental activities and differences in levels of engagement with the initiative by new organizational leaders.

Changes in Green Team Leadership and Membership

Six Green Teams lost their original leaders and had to regroup. In some cases, new leaders stepped up to take over. The Green Committee at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish went through a lull when its first leader left, but continued to meet and plan, and emerged with renewed energy as Katia Reeves stepped up from member to leader. In contrast, at Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor, the Green Vineyard initiative stalled when Phil Brabbs became ill and was unable to continue leading the group. Subsequent efforts to restart the initiative have not proven durable. The difference between the two communities may be due to stage of life factors that affected the size and continuity of the Green Teams. The original Green Vineyard participants, and the subsequent short-term members, have been predominantly college students who soon graduate and leave town. This regular attrition has prevented Green Vineyard from achieving enough of a critical mass to provide for leadership succession or group continuity. The Green Committee at St. Thomas Aquinas, on the other hand, is composed of long-term parish members who are nearing the end of their careers or are newly retired. Despite some attrition due to family illnesses, each year there has been a core group of about six people, which seems to provide the critical mass necessary for continuity over time.

In three cases, completion of green certification processes coincided with reduced activity from former sustainability champions. After Temple Shalom completed its certification, the Green Team that had formed for that purpose disbanded and Wolfson had no energy for organizing a new team to take on new activities. The one group project that continued was the community garden, which was organized by a passionate gardener. Shortly after Anshe Emeth

Memorial Temple became green certified, Chodroff moved to a new teaching job, which drew his attention and energy. He arranged for another member of the temple to become his co-chair on the Green Team in order to ease the transition to new leadership, however the pace of activity development slowed. At First Universalist Church of Rockland, the original leaders of the Green Sanctuary Committee stepped back from their leadership roles after the church was certified. As a result, the church ceased to develop new activities. Lucie Bauer, a former committee leader, suggested that it was natural for a community to go through phases of activity followed by lulls, and that new leaders would emerge if they were needed. In the meantime, two of the major projects the Green Sanctuary Committee had helped develop were continuing quite successfully under the leadership of people who were deeply invested in those particular activities.

These changes in leadership generally occurred because of stage-of-life issues. Leaders left or reduced their levels of activity because of jobs, health, or family needs. The same types of issues affected continuity of membership on Green Teams. The teams often suffered from member attrition as individuals graduated from college, moved out of town for new jobs, or reduced their volunteer hours in order to care for family members. Reductions in team membership increased the workload for remaining members, putting them at greater risk of burnout, especially in cases where lack of critical mass on Green Teams meant there were few people available to take over leadership roles. The challenges posed by loss of personnel indicate that continuity of leadership and group membership, which was lacking in some cases, was a sustaining factor that contributed to the durability of other sustainability initiatives.

Changes in Clergy and Staff

Lack of continuity among faith leaders and staff also created stresses for the individuals leading four sustainability initiatives. In some cases, where organizational leaders were strongly supportive of initiatives, staff losses were replaced by people chosen for their ability to continue the work. At St. John's Abbey, people were concerned that the untimely death of Fr. Paul Schwietz would undermine the newly formed arboretum. Fortunately, the abbey hired a professional arboretum/land manager with extensive experience in science-based sustainable forestry to replace Schwietz, and the arboretum has flourished under his care. Staff replacements could, however, lead to tensions among individuals. In one case, a staff person's retirement meant dissolution of an initiative leader/staff partnership that had been important for the

development and implementation of the community's sustainability initiative. The challenge of building a new relationship with the replacement staff person made continuation of the environmental programs more difficult for the leader.

Whereas changes in staff affected implementation of specific projects, changes in organizational leadership affected integration of sustainability into the wider community. In two cases, changes in clergy meant the Green Teams had little active support from their organizational leaders. Neither of the new pastors objected to the initiatives but they were not personally interested in the environment, and Green Team members felt that the lack of a voice from the pulpit promoting sustainability as a faith issue undermined their ability to attract new members for their committees or increase levels of community engagement. This insight into the role clergy played in building congregational support for initiatives will be examined further in the Faith Leader chapter.

SUSTAINING FACTORS REVEALED BY RESPONSES TO CHALLENGES

Interviewee descriptions of the resources that helped them respond to the personal challenges they encountered reveal a number of factors located in other domains of the faith community that intersected with the Individual domain and contributed to individuals' abilities to persevere in their initiative leadership (see Table 7.3). Sustainability champions found resources to solve knowledge deficits related to specific activities by seeking out experts in the congregation membership and in the wider community. The external community also provided knowledge resources for complex issues like how to green a religious organization. Faith leaders provided advice to individuals who were uncertain about how to connect sustainability with a community's spiritual practices. Moral support to mitigate emotional challenges came from faith leaders' religious messages and fellowship with congregation members. The level of support from the congregation also affected the size of the Green Team, which determined whether the group attained a critical mass sufficient to allow individuals on the verge of burnout to take breaks. Continuity of personnel proved to be a factor that sustained initiatives, an issue made evident by the decreased levels of activity in communities that lost their Green Team leaders. Critical mass helped mitigate the effects of personnel changes by increasing the availability of members who could step up to replace a departing leader and, sometimes when Green Teams lost leaders, clergy (faith leaders) recruited members of the congregation to take over. Continuity of

clergy and staff personnel also helped sustain initiatives by ensuring stable relationship networks and consistent levels of support across the organization.

Table 7.3 Sustaining Factors Revealed by Responses to Challenges

Challenges	Responses: Sustaining Factors	Domains affecting challenges & responses
Knowledge Deficits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to enact a specific activity (e.g. garden) • How to connect faith and sustainability • How to make the organization more sustainable 	Locate resources Clergy advice External programs	Congregation; External sources Faith Leaders External sources
Emotional Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burn-out • Lack of interest from community • Despair at magnitude of crisis 	Take breaks ---- Religious messages, fellowship, action	Congregation Congregation Faith Leaders, Congregation
Personnel Changes (lack of continuity) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of Green Team leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Succession concerns • Changes in clergy • Changes in staff 	Team member steps up; clergy recruit leaders	Congregation Faith Leaders Organization Organization

EFFECTS ON INDIVIDUALS: PERSONAL REWARDS

Personal rewards arising from participation in sustainability initiatives also played a significant role in motivating individuals to persevere, which helped sustain initiatives over time. In response to a question about how participating in initiatives affected them, interviewees described a sense of satisfaction that came from using their skills, often in activities they enjoyed, to address issues of personal concern. The result was a sense of personal efficacy. Their satisfaction was further increased by tangible results indicating that their efforts were benefiting people and communities, and the conviction that, through these activities, they were living out their religious values (see Table 7.4). Research in environmental psychology indicates that experiences of satisfaction due to a sense of efficacy (or “competence”) and acting in accord with values can motivate individuals to engage in sustained behavior change, which suggests that these personal rewards were additional factors that enabled champions to persevere in leading initiatives (e.g. De Young 2000, Kaplan 1990).

Table 7.4 Effects on Individuals Who Participated in Initiatives

Effects		
Satisfaction	Addressing personal concerns Engaging in enjoyable activities	
Sense of Efficacy	Using skills Tangible results	
Living Values	Building relationships Helping individuals Helping community	

As noted in the discussion of gardening earlier in this chapter, individuals often became involved in environmental activities they enjoyed. Some of these activities allowed them to repurpose skills developed in careers and hobbies. Frank Mundo and Dick Cadwegan, who organized the WindowDressers project for First Universalist Church of Rockland, were able to apply their wood-working hobbies and use tools in their basement workshops to construct storm window inserts using measurements calculated through a computer program written by Mundo, a retired programmer. Tom Matthews, a farmer’s son trained in computer technology during a youthful stint in the military, had a knack for tinkering. After retiring from a career in sales, he had taken the position as maintenance person at Madison Christian Community where the church’s sustainability initiative provided opportunities to exercise his mechanical gifts. One of the pastors had lots of ideas about how to practice sustainability but turning those ideas into reality often required mechanical creativity. “[Rev.] Jeff has been an idea fountain. He’ll say, ‘What would happen if we....’ My contribution is to figure out how to do it without spending too much; how to make it feasible.” According to Matthews, this symbiotic relationship made his work at the church “a super job for an old guy.”

Thus, individuals applied their accumulated skills as computer programmers, gardeners, teachers, preachers, administrators, policy advocates, artists, geologists, musicians, and community activists in pursuit of creating more sustainable religious organizations. Tangible evidence of successful outcomes inspired a sense of efficacy and increased individuals’ enthusiasm for continuing their efforts. When the Earth Care House Church from Trinity Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg succeeded in persuading the Presbyterian Church (USA) to adopt their resolution against coal-based air pollution, it showed them that it was possible for a small group to accomplish big things. For Lynn Cameron, the high point of the coal resolution

came from its effects: Southern Company, a major utility, felt the need to defend its environmental record and Presbyterian lobbyists worked to change a legislative policy.

Southern Company, a major polluter, heard about it [the anti-coal resolution] and contacted the Presbyterian Church. They wanted to meet with representatives to talk about it and we were invited to participate. Southern Company showed this Powerpoint to explain how wonderful they were, how they give money to Boy Scouts to plant trees, and we weren't buying it because they are still polluters and damaging ecosystems.

I think it's important for perpetrators to meet the people they affect... The resolution did have an impact. Southern Company heard about it and that led them to have a dialogue with us. They met us face-to-face.

And information about the resolution was communicated to senators on an energy committee that was about to make a vote on some legislation. I don't remember exactly what it was. But there were some Presbyterians on the committee and the legislation passed by one vote. Maybe the resolution helped it get through that subcommittee.

The results of advocacy work are often difficult to quantify so knowing that a utility company felt its reputation was under threat and that lobbyists were taking action were particularly gratifying outcomes. Other initiatives also produced results that gave sustainability champions a sense of efficacy. At Holy Wisdom Monastery, where the sisters, staff, and volunteers restored ten acres of farmland to prairie each year until they had completed 100 acres, success could be measured in decreasing amounts of runoff. Where precipitation had once carried pollutants into Lake Mendota, all rain now filtrated into the soil to nourish native plants, a transformation further made apparent by annually increasing numbers of flowers and birds. Restoring a prairie inspired a sense of efficacy through hands-on activities and tangible results, however similar feelings were generated by purchasing solar panels, washing reuseable dishes, paying lower utility bills after installing storm window inserts, or seeing the banner indicating one's community is green certified. All of these tangible outcomes gave interviewees a sense of efficacy; they were taking meaningful action to address environmental concerns.

Individuals also found satisfaction in their work because, in addition to benefiting the environment, they were benefiting people. At the First Universalist Church of Rockland, church sponsorship of a young couple starting a Community Supported Agriculture farm was motivated by an interest in local food, but also included a desire to have a relationship with the food producers. The success of the farm was, therefore, not just measured in produce, it was also measured in the friendships that grew up between church members and the farmers, who eventually joined the church. At Madison Christian Community, gardeners are fond of recounting a story about ten-year old Ruth, a participant in the Kids in the Garden program, who

told one of the adults, “You can’t lie to the earth. The earth knows when you are lying. I might tell you I watered, but the plants know I didn’t. And they will tell you I didn’t” (Wild and Bakken 2009: 60). Narratives like Ruth’s are perceived as evidence that the garden program fulfills its objective of “nourishing soil and soul” by teaching both gardening skills and values.

As Ruth’s story indicates, individuals involved in faith-based initiatives placed great emphasis on the importance of earth care as a means to live out their religious values and practice compassion for others. Consequently, it makes sense that Reverend Jeff Wild considered relationship building, among church members and between church and community, to be among the significant effects that explained why individuals found satisfaction in their gardening labors.

Working in the garden—it’s a really rewarding experience for people. They find it meaningful; it’s meaningful work. And through it their relationships with one another are strengthened and they get to work with children they would not meet otherwise. It generates a sense of what is meant by the Greek word “hilarity.” This doesn’t mean laughter in the popular sense, it means “deep gladness.” What we do here facilitated a sense of deep gladness.

This description of gladness nicely sums up the sense of joyful satisfaction that many individuals’ expressed as they spoke about their participation in faith-based sustainability initiatives.

SUMMARY AND DOMAIN INTERACTIONS

How Individuals Affected Initiatives

INTRODUCTION

Individuals played a crucial role in the emergence and development of these fifteen sustainability initiatives by providing the leadership that turned idea into action. Chapters 6 and 7 examined what motivated individuals to develop and participate in sustainability initiatives, why they chose to act through the venue of their faith communities, what enabled them to effectively lead initiatives, and how participation in faith-based sustainability initiatives affected them. This section summarizes the findings from these two chapters and delineates how the factors that enabled individuals to be effective sustainability champions were influenced by contributions from other domains.

CHARACTERISTICS THAT ENABLED INDIVIDUALS TO LEAD INITIATIVES

The cross-case analysis indicated that personal factors in three key areas contributed to individuals' role as leaders of sustainability initiatives. First, personal interests created a deep sense of *commitment* to sustainability that motivated these individuals to take action. These champions were passionate about their sustainability efforts because they provided a means to address multiple personal interests including: caring for family and community; protecting local and global environments; and acting on religious values of responsibility for people and God's creation. The conviction that environmental issues are faith issues made it natural to undertake sustainability initiatives through the venues of faith communities, especially for individuals who had prior experience as volunteers serving on administrative committees and working in faith community ministries. Personal windows of opportunity also meant that many of these leaders had time and energy to invest in a new project.

Second, these sustainability champions had knowledge and relationships that contributed to their *leadership capacity*, which enabled them to effectively organize and implement

initiatives through the venue of their faith communities. Many individuals had personal experience in environmental education or advocacy work that provided foundational knowledge for developing sustainability efforts. They also drew on leadership skills comprised of institutional knowledge and project management expertise acquired through previous service on committees in their faith communities. As long-term, active members who were embedded in their communities, these champions were known and trusted by their faith leaders and congregations. Trust and networks of personal relationships facilitated their ability to enlist support for initiatives from people in diverse areas of a faith community, while institutional knowledge and project management skills assisted champions in implementing and sustaining activities.

Finally, using their leadership skills to address personal interests resulted in a sense of *satisfaction* that sustained individuals and helped them persevere in their efforts to implement sustainability initiatives.

DOMAIN INTERACTIONS

The personal factors that affected individuals' commitment, leadership capacity and sense of satisfaction were also influenced by contributions from Faith Leader, Congregation, and Organization domains (see Table 7.5).

Table 7.5 Individual Leadership Factors and Their Interactions with Other Domains

Factors that enabled leadership	Interactions with other domains that contributed to Individuals' leadership	Effects on the individual
Commitment: Personal interests Environment Religion Windows of Opportunity	<u>Faith Leaders</u> : religious messages <u>Congregation</u> : fellowship, moral support	Motivation to take action
Leadership Capacity: Sustainability knowledge Leadership skills Institutional knowledge Project management Embeddedness Trust Relationship networks	<u>Faith Leaders</u> : authorization, advice on actions <u>Congregation</u> : support due to relationships and trust; critical mass <u>Organization</u> : venue for institutional knowledge; networks helped integrate earth care into multiple areas	Effective leadership: Ability to organize and implement initiatives in a faith community
Sense of Satisfaction	<u>Faith Leaders</u> : religious messages <u>Congregation</u> : affirmation	Sustained leadership and participation

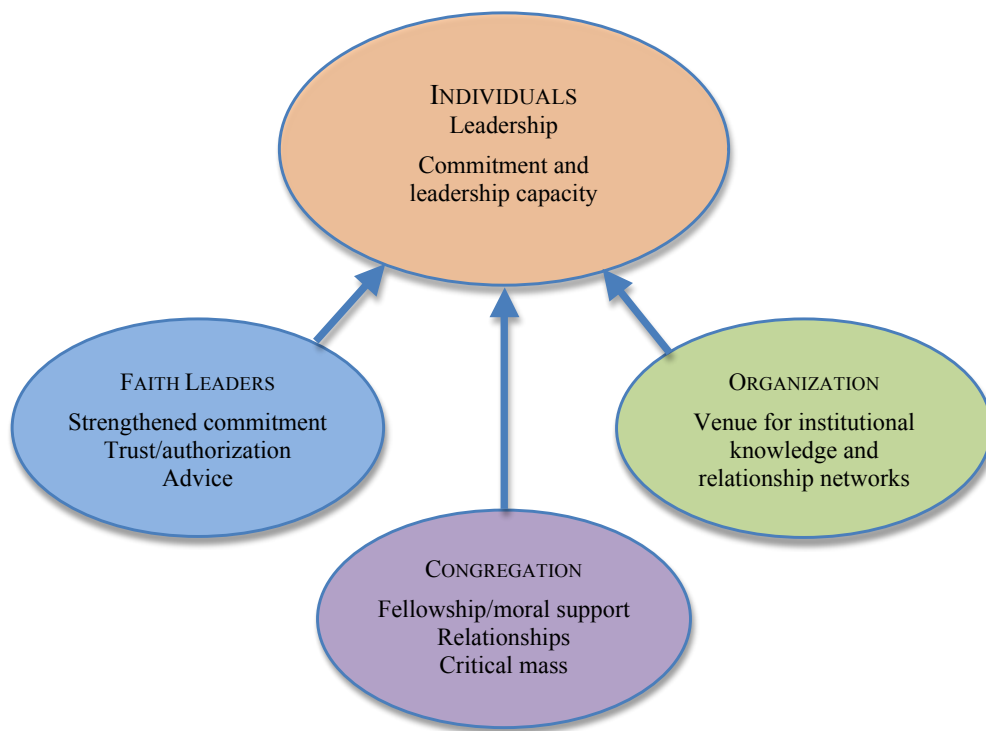
Faith leaders strengthened individuals' sense of commitment by sharing messages that affirmed a religious obligation to care for the earth and assuring champions that their efforts were valued as expressions of faith, regardless of their efficacy. Faith leaders also enhanced individuals' leadership capacity by authorizing initiatives and providing advice on how to take action through the venue of the religious organization. The organization, with its procedural norms for managing committees and venues for enacting values, provided the context within which individual champions applied their institutional knowledge and interacted with their relationship networks. The congregation, with its body of members, provided the volunteers serving on those committees and supporting earth care activities, which, in turn, influenced the network of relationships through which sustainability was integrated into the faith community. Furthermore, fellowship with like-minded members of the congregation strengthened individuals' sense of commitment and provided moral support that enabled them to persevere in spite of emotional challenges.

The interplay between individuals and other domains, which affected relationship networks and levels of community involvement, also influenced champions' ability to sustain initiative leadership over time. The impact of these contextual factors became particularly evident when personnel changes in the organization or on the green team created challenges for initiatives. Although changes in organizational leadership or staff did not directly affect the personal leadership capabilities of individuals, they did affect the milieu within which the leaders worked, especially the relationship networks through which they implemented environmental activities. Loss of supportive staff relationships could complicate implementation and maintenance of projects. Durability of initiatives was also affected by the Congregation domain, which influenced participation in green teams. Low levels of congregational involvement could lead to inadequate critical mass on a green team, thereby increasing likelihood of individual burnout and lack of continuity for team leadership and membership. Hence, the interaction of elements from various domains affected individuals' ability to organize and sustain initiatives within their faith communities.

Despite the challenges, interviewees persevered because of the personal rewards they experienced while participating in the initiatives. Through these sustainability activities, individuals were able to use their knowledge and skills to address intertwined personal interests: they were protecting people and places they loved while acting on their religious values. Those

actions often involved enjoyable activities, strengthened their relationships with other members of the congregation, and produced tangible results that benefited people and communities. These outcomes produced a sense of efficacy and gave people hope that they could make a difference in spite of the magnitude of the world’s environmental problems. The satisfaction engendered by these personal rewards motivated individuals to persevere in their efforts to promote sustainability, thereby helping to sustain the initiatives. Figure 2 illustrates the interactions between individuals and the other three domains.

Figure 2 Interactions between Individuals and the Other Domains



Chapters 6 and 7 identified characteristics within the Individual domain that contributed to the commitment, leadership capabilities, and satisfaction that enabled individuals to be effective sustainability champions within their faith communities. They also revealed an interplay of factors across domains that affected individuals’ ability to organize and sustain initiatives. These interactions illustrate the importance of understanding the faith-community context, comprised of faith leaders, congregation, and organization, within which these initiatives arose. Factors within the Individual domain interacted with contributions from the

Faith Leader and Congregation domains to create the sense of commitment that motivated individuals to champion sustainability. Contributions from Faith Leader, Congregation, and Organization domains also interacted with the personal characteristics that enabled individuals to be effective initiative leaders. Therefore, understanding the processes through which these sustainability initiatives developed requires deeper analysis of the contributions from these other three domains. What kind of religions messages did faith leaders contribute? What factors influenced congregational support and whether religious organizations were appropriate venues through which to implement sustainability initiatives? The next section will examine the Faith Leader domain to better understand how it contributed to the process of embedding sustainability in these faith communities.

DOMAIN II

FAITH LEADERS

Legitimizing Sustainability as a Faith Community Issue

INTRODUCTION

While it was lay members of the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation (JRC) in Evanston who started an environmental initiative that eventually led to construction of the first Platinum-LEED certified¹ synagogue in the United States, they could not have achieved this outcome without assistance from Rabbi Rosen. A few members had formed an environmental task force to explore connections between their religious tradition and care for the environment. Although they were able to study on their own, they turned to their rabbi for advice about how to incorporate environmental stewardship into Jewish spiritual practices. Rosen suggested they develop a community celebration of Tu B'Shevat, a festival in the Jewish liturgical cycle of holy days that has become associated with environmental themes, and helped the group find the information they needed to carry through with the idea. Later, when the Environmental Task Force suggested that the community consider following green building practices in the construction of their new synagogue, Rabbi Rosen played a key role in advocating for the idea with the board of trustees and the congregation. During the building planning process, Rosen began board meetings with environmentally themed scriptural readings and wrote blog posts explaining how sustainability dovetailed with the social justice ministries of his congregation. Thus, the rabbi provided vital support for the development of the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation's sustainability initiative in two ways. First, as a religious authority, he was able to legitimate sustainability as a Jewish value and help integrate it into the community's religious

¹ LEED is an abbreviation for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, a formal program for "green" building that ranks buildings based on incorporation of design features and construction practices that reduce resource consumption.

practices. Second, as manager of the religious organization, he exerted influence on the community's decision processes.

As the JRC story illustrates, faith leaders made key contributions to the process of integrating sustainability into these fifteen faith communities by legitimating earth care as a religious issue and helping to incorporate it into the practices of their faith communities. Religion is central to the purpose of these organizations; their mission is to encourage people to develop personal religious beliefs and apply religious values to their daily lives. Therefore any new areas of activity must be connected to the religious tradition that is foundational to a faith community's purpose and sense of identity. "Faith leaders" are the people with authority to define the beliefs and values of a religious community and make decisions about community practices based on those values. Their faith leadership includes the two roles, religious authority and organizational manager, through which Rabbi Rosen facilitated the adoption of earth care as an area of activity at the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation. It should be noted, however, that whereas these roles were fulfilled by a single pastor in eleven of the cases, they were distributed among several people in the four women's monastic communities.

Defining who qualifies as a faith leader is somewhat complicated in a study that includes several religious traditions. In many US congregations, faith leaders are clergy who have been officially ordained after completing a formal training program that includes study of a religion's scriptures² and philosophical teachings. Protestant Christian clergy are usually called ministers, Catholic and Episcopal clergy are called priests, Jewish clergy are called rabbis, and all of these religions use the job title of pastor for clergy who serve in congregations. Some Christian denominations authorize ministers who attain their status through non-academic systems such as a few evangelical traditions in which people become ministers by describing personal religious experiences that demonstrate a spiritual calling. Faith communities may also rely on groups rather than individuals for faith leadership: many Catholic and Episcopal women's convents and Quaker meetings, which emphasize egalitarianism among their members, designate committees or voluntary groups of lay members to periodically review and revise statements that define a congregation's beliefs. Because the Catholic Church does not ordain women as clergy, faith leaders in convents are, technically, lay leaders. Decisions about how to apply values to

² Some religions have oral traditions rather than written scriptures, however the traditions studied in this research all use written texts.

community management practices may be mediated by leadership teams that are elected to serve for a designated period of time, a practice that has become common in women's monastic communities where the teams have either replaced the older system of leadership by a single mother superior/prioress/abbess or serve as counselors to the prioress. These leadership teams draw on the religious values and missions of their communities as guidelines for administrative decisions.

Both types of faith leadership, clergy and lay leaders, were represented among the cases in this study. Clergy served as the primary faith leaders at Saint John's Abbey and in the non-monastic congregations, where their dual roles as religious authorities and organizational managers provided them with diverse opportunities to establish the legitimacy of sustainability as a focal area for their communities. The two roles were fulfilled separately in women's monastic communities where lay-leader sustainability champions led efforts to define the religious bases for faith-based sustainability while leadership teams served as the organizational managers who authorized earth care initiatives. Together, both champions and leadership teams contributed to the process of exploring the relationship between earth care and an order's religious mission and promoting integration of sustainability into their faith communities.

MOTIVATIONS FOR PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY

In all fifteen cases, interviewees mentioned the importance of faith leader support for the development of their initiatives, however the types and continuity of that support varied. Nine of the non-monastic congregations had active clergy support for their sustainability initiatives and the tenth had passive support. Among the five monastic communities, four had active support from community leadership and the fifth had support from a task force exploring faith and environmental stewardship. Although faith leaders across the cases affirmed the importance of sustainability, the strength of their commitment to promoting the issue and the amount of energy they invested in community sustainability initiatives varied in accord with their motivations for promoting their community initiatives. Motives fell into three categories (see Table 8.1). The first category included personal interests, such as traditional environmental concerns about protecting natural areas or responding to environmental crises, and enthusiasm for outdoor activities. The second category centered on community interests including: support for environmental affinity groups and implementation of a community vision. The third category

emphasized fulfillment of regional denominational goals by joining green certification programs run by external organizations or by the denomination.

Table 8.1 Faith Leader Motivations for Promoting Sustainability

Motivation		Number of cases		
		Non-monastic	Monastic	Total
1. Personal environmental interests	Environmental concerns	9	5	14
	Outdoor activities	2	3	5
2. Faith community interests	Support individuals	5	3	8
	Implement community ethic	2	4	6
3. Fulfill denominational goals	Participate in external program	2		2
	Participate in denominational program	1		1

1. Personal Environmental Interests

Personal environmental interests such as environmental concerns and outdoor hobbies were the most prevalent motivation for faith leader involvement in sustainability initiatives. In fourteen out of fifteen cases, faith leaders took up sustainability as a faith issue because of concerns about climate change, pollution, or development that threatened local natural areas. As described in the chapter on Individual sustainability champions, two pastors served as champions and prompted creation of sustainability initiatives as a way to respond to their personal concerns. In most cases, however, the initiatives were led by lay people with support from faith leaders who shared their environmental concerns. Some faith leaders also had personal interests in outdoor activities that motivated them to participate in sustainability projects and support development of initiatives. Rev. Jeff Wild (MCC) and Sr. Mary David Walgenbach (HWM) were avid gardeners, Rev. Ann Held (TPC) was fond of hiking and camping, and Abbot John Klassen (SJA), who had a doctorate in bio-organic chemistry, spent considerable time in the gardens and forests of the abbey. These personal interests, both in addressing environmental crises and in outdoor activities, motivated faith leaders to encourage the sustainability champions in their communities and inspired them to compose sermons and writings on environmental topics.

2. Faith Community Interests

Some faith leaders were motivated by a desire to support environmental affinity groups or the community as a whole after it had identified environment as an issue to be addressed by

the religious organization. In these cases, leaders were working to fulfill their roles in fostering members' religious lives and in promoting the welfare of the religious organization. Thus, there was a two-directional relationship between the faith leaders and the community members: the faith leaders were responsive to community interests and the community was responsive to the guidance of its leaders.

In five non-monastic cases, clergy provided advice and support for affinity groups and individuals who sought to organize environmental activities under the auspices of the faith community. For example at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg, the pastor advised members of the Earth Care House Church about how to bring the problem of air pollution from coal-based energy production to the attention of their denomination. She also applauded their environmental work in the congregation and shared information about their accomplishments with people outside the faith community. Clergy also provided support to individuals who told them of their desires to integrate personal environmental interests with their faith traditions. Several years before Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple enrolled in the GreenFaith certification program, Mike Chodroff had a conversation with his rabbi in which they discussed Chodroff's desire to connect his work as an environmental educator with his religious life. Consequently, when the opportunity to pursue green certification arose, the rabbi knew that Chodroff would be interested in leading the program.

In three monastic communities, organizational leaders tried to balance support for individual members' desires to pursue environmental interests with community needs. The abbot of Saint John's Abbey sent Fr. Schwietz to school to earn an MS in Forestry as preparation for employing him as abbey land manager, a position that fit within the structure of the monastic organization. Schwietz's subsequent proposal to create an educational arboretum was more difficult since it required making changes to the organization. Schwietz lobbied for his idea for a decade and, eventually, the abbot authorized a study to discern whether such a project would enhance the work of the abbey and university. When Sr. Ginny Jones worked for Nazareth College in the early 1970s, leaders of the community were supportive of her project to create the Bow in the Clouds Nature Preserve but it was largely a one-woman initiative and became overgrown when Jones moved from teaching to hospital administrative work. By 1990, however, there was growing interest in environmental issues among the members of the organization, and the leadership team asked Jones to "begin some type of 'environmental' program." She created a

ministry in eco-spirituality that became part of the organization's new retreat center and, during the same period, was able to begin restoring Bow in the Clouds.

As these monastic cases demonstrate, organizational leaders were more supportive of environmental efforts when the subject was of interest to a larger number of community members. Thus, in six cases, faith leaders were motivated to support earth care efforts in response to a community-wide earth care ethic. The four women's monastic communities engaged in formal mission discernment processes that led to adoption of care for the earth/environment as a community ethic. As a result, leadership teams provided resources such as staff time and funds to implement initiatives that fulfilled the community's environmental ethic. Clergy in two of the non-monastic communities also took up the task of implementing an earth care mission after their communities adopted a sustainability ethic through a community discernment process. Like the cases in which faith leaders supported individuals and affinity groups, a community ethic could motivate faith leaders without prior personal interest in the environment to endorse sustainability initiatives because of their role as caretakers with responsibility for supporting the spiritual lives of their community members.

3. Fulfill Denominational Goals

In three cases, clergy encouraged congregational involvement in sustainability initiatives in response to regional denominational organizations that were encouraging local congregations to take up earth care practices. Two Jewish congregations participated in an external green certification program that was promoted by their denominational leaders and a Catholic parish participated in a program established by the regional diocese, or district, to which it belonged. When the regional branch of the Union for Reform Judaism encouraged member congregations in New Jersey to enroll in the GreenFaith program, Rabbi Miller, senior pastor at Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, embraced the idea. According to members of his green team, the rabbi considered adoption of the idea a "no brainer" because it fit with the community's religious ethics and he had an environmental educator and a junior rabbi in his congregation who would be able to lead the effort (Chodroff). Rabbi Malinger at Temple Shalom had a similarly positive response; he too knew he had some members who would embrace the idea. The pastoral leaders of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Palo Alto, CA, also authorized a community sustainability initiative because of a regional denominational movement. In 2009, the bishop of the Diocese of

San Jose, to which the parish belongs, organized a Catholic Green Initiative to encourage all parishes in the Santa Clara Valley to adopt more sustainable practices. Consequently, when lay members of St. Thomas Aquinas asked for permission to form a Green Committee, the senior pastor acquiesced even though he did not have much personal interest in environmental activities.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Once faith leaders responded to these motivations and decided to support a sustainability initiative, they took action in ways that fit with their roles as leaders within faith communities. First, through their status as religious authorities, they articulated the reasons that sustainability should be considered a religious issue to be addressed by their communities. Second, as organizational managers, they helped integrate earth care into the practices of their faith communities. The following two chapters explore the contributions that faith leaders made to the development of sustainability initiatives within the fifteen case-study communities. Chapter 8 focuses on the messages they used to legitimate sustainability as a religious issue and motivate community members to engage in earth care activities. Chapter 9 examines the mechanisms through which they were able to promote implementation of earth care activities within the context of their faith communities. The chapters focus on the following questions:

Chapter 8

- How did faith leaders frame sustainability as a faith issue?
- What challenges did they face?

Chapter 9

- Through what mechanisms did faith leaders promote sustainability as an area of activity for faith communities?
- How did faith leader contributions affect development of the initiatives?

Summary and Domain Interactions

- How did the Faith Leader Domain interact with the other three domains?

Chapter 8

FAITH LEADERS Legitimizing Sustainability as a Faith Issue

It's important to make sure that everything we do is theologically undergirded. We know we need to care for the environment but we have to ask why should we, as people of faith, have concern for the environment? (Emphasis added)

Reverend Jeff Wild, Madison Christian Community

INTRODUCTION

One significant contribution that faith leaders made to the sustainability initiatives was to legitimate sustainability as a faith issue that required a response from members of a faith community. Care of the earth or earth care was the most common phrase they used to describe the environmental mission of a faith community. A few also spoke of care for the environment or used the term creation care, which comes from eco-theological writings. “Sustainability” only began to appear in more recent sermons but was growing in popularity and, because it encompasses the ideas expressed by earth care and creation care, this term has been used throughout the dissertation as a general term for the goals embodied in these initiatives. Faith leaders conferred legitimacy on sustainability through their roles as religious authorities who interpret traditional religious teachings and reflect on their application to modern life. The primary purpose of a religious organization is to support the development of its members’ religious lives and. Christian and Jewish traditions orient their beliefs about moral behavior around scriptures and interpretive commentaries that were written long before modern environmental crises emerged. Consequently, they do not directly address issues such as climate change. Clergy and lay faith leaders continually update their teachings about religious ethics, the moral behavior incumbent on members of a tradition, by reflecting on modern issues that affect their lives in relation to the core values of their faith traditions. In the case studies, faith leaders followed this tradition of interpretation and presented sustainability as an issue that needed to be

addressed because of their community’s religious ethics. The ways faith leaders framed their earth care messages were influenced by two key factors: 1) the denominational teachings of their religious tradition and 2) the traditional ministries of their faith communities.

FRAMING SUSTAINABILITY AS A FAITH COMMUNITY ISSUE

Faith leaders made a key contribution to the development of the sustainability initiatives by legitimating the idea that sustainability was an issue that needed to be addressed by their faith communities. In all fifteen cases, faith leaders explained that sustainability was closely linked with their religious tradition’s foundational values, however the specific message frames used to describe why people of faith ought to engage in environmental activities varied due to differences in denomination, community mission, and faith leaders’ personal interests. Despite these variations, the messages followed three thematic motifs (see Table 8.2). 1) A stewardship motif was used to explain that people have a religious duty to care for the natural world. 2) A social justice motif stated that people have a duty to aid the poor and disadvantaged. Most faith leaders employed both stewardship and social justice motifs, although with greater emphasis on one or the other. 3) Some leaders also called for action on the grounds that people of faith had a special role to play in creating a more environmentally sustainable society.

Table 8.2 Framing Sustainability as a Faith Community Issue

Motif	Religious frame	Number of cases
1. Earth Stewardship	A. Religious Duty	
	Fulfill Commandments	5
	Dominion = stewardship	3
	“Do not waste”	1
	Recognize interdependence	
	B. Earth is sacred	
	God’s beloved creation	9
	See God in nature	3
	Place for religious development	4
	C. Sacred Place	5
2. Social justice	Protect the poor and disadvantaged	15
3. Special role of religion	Confront the powerful	2
	Provide a positive vision	3

1. EARTH STEWARDSHIP

Across the cases, faith leaders emphasized that people of faith have a moral obligation to be stewards of the earth. Within this overarching theme, they presented diverse reasons for that

obligation. Many argued that earth care was inherent in *religious duties* prescribed by specific religious ethics that were central to their faith traditions. Others emphasized that the *earth is sacred* and, thereby, should be treated with care. They often added personal incentives for protecting the sacred earth, such as ensuring continued access to nature because it enriches individual spiritual lives. Arguments about the spiritual benefits of nature ranged from the idea that people *encounter God* or *learn religious teachings* through interactions with nature to the idea that specific lands should be cared for because they are *sacred places*.

A. Earth Care as a Religious Duty

One of the most prevalent frames used to explain why sustainability is a faith issue was the idea that stewardship of the earth is included in the moral obligations incumbent on members of a religious tradition. For biblical faith communities, this moral duty was linked with the commandments, or *mitzvot*, that delineate proper religious and social behavior. For Unitarian Universalists, stewardship was described as a way to live in accord with the Seven Principles that define the religion's values.

In US Jewish and Christian environmental organizations, the idea of environmental stewardship has become closely linked to the biblical creation story¹ and this theme appears in most of the cases. In the three Jewish communities, rabbis articulated a Jewish duty to care for the earth during Rosh Hashanah, the New Year's festival that celebrates creation. In their sermons, they described the beauty of God's creation but then pointed out that human behavior was damaging the world and therefore was out of sync with God's plan. As Rabbi Epstein explained:

The activities that we have undertaken as we have filled up the earth and have become fruitful and multiplied—our use of natural resources, our use of toxic chemicals and dangerous energy sources—have resulted in dramatic changes to our air, water, our forest and to the many other species with whom we share Creation. We have gone too far. We have become dangerous not only to the atmosphere and the ocean and the animals, but to ourselves, and to our own children. We are not fulfilling God's blessing. And it is NOT good. (2010)

¹ Organizations such as The Coalition on Environment and Jewish Life, the National Council of Churches' Creation Justice Ministry, the Catholic Climate Covenant, and the Evangelical Environmental Network have developed resources to provide scriptural support for faith-based environmental action. The biblical creation story features prominently in their materials.

All of the rabbis in this study stated that Jews had an obligation to respond to the earth's environmental crises and they cited two texts as bases for a Jewish responsibility to care for the earth. The first text was the biblical creation story. In Genesis 1:28, God gives human beings "dominion" over other living beings, a passage that has often been cited to suggest that biblical religions may encourage people to exploit natural resources (e.g. White 1967). The rabbis argued that the passage should be interpreted to mean that people are given the responsibility to be stewards of God's creation, an interpretation that is reinforced by Genesis 2, in which God instructs the first human beings to "tend the garden."

God took the *adam* [the man²], and placed him in the Garden of Eden: to till it, and to protect it. The *adam* was commanded by God to be *shomeir Adamah*, a protector of the earth. So, too, we are commanded to be *Shomrei Adamah*, protectors of the earth. Living according to that commandedness, along with sustaining awareness of our intimate connection and ultimate dependence on Creation, are vital, I believe, to our existence. (Epstein 2010)

The second text used to prove humans have a divine mandate to care for the earth comes from a rabbinic *midrash*, or commentary, that expands on the Genesis creation story. In the words of Rabbi Malinger of Temple Shalom:

There is a Midrash, a rabbinic story that says: When God created the first people, He showed them all the trees of the Garden of Eden saying, "See My handiwork, how beautiful and choice they are... be careful not to ruin and destroy my world, for if you do, there is no one to repair it after you." (*Midrash Rabbah Ecclesiastes 7:13*)

We are, according to tradition, the descendants of Adam and Eve and that voice speaking to them in the garden is speaking to us, right now. There is no one to repair it after us. Our very existence demands that we are stewards of this great planet. (Malinge 2010c)

The rabbis provided further legitimation of sustainability as a Jewish issue by citing a passage from the book of Deuteronomy that has become the basis for the modern Jewish environmental ethic of *bal tashchit*, "Do not waste." Deuteronomy 20:19-20, which occurs in a list of rules governing warfare, says that those who lay siege to a city must not destroy (*bal tashchit*) the fruit-bearing trees belonging to the city. Rabbi Rosen explained that the rabbinic tradition had transformed this command into an environmental commandment.

² In the Hebrew text, the first man is called "*ha adam*" or "the man," which is usually translated as the name Adam in English versions of the Bible. The word for man is closely related to the word *adamah*, "ground, earth, soil, land." Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, Unabridged, Electronic Database. BibleSoft, Inc.

Indeed, the sages of the Talmud would eventually apply the term *bal tashchit* (“do not destroy”) to issues far transcending concern over fruit-bearing trees during wartime. The concept “*bal tashchit*” eventually became a Jewish legal term referring to the destruction of natural resources on a wide scale, ranging from the wanton killing of animals (Talmud Hullin 7b) to the wasting of fuel (Talmud Shabat 67b). (Rosen 2011b)

Rabbi Malinger also used this rabbinic teaching to legitimate the idea that sustainability was “a Jewish issue.” He noted that the medieval scholar Maimonides “emphasizes the gravity” of violating this biblical prohibition against needless destruction by teaching that a person who commits acts of wanton destruction should be “administered a disciplinary beating imposed by the Rabbis” (Mishneh Torah 6:10). The strength of the punishment illustrates the importance of the ethic.

Our sources make it very clear that it is not just an ethical issue, or a personal choice, but a *Jewish* imperative, a legally binding prohibition not to waste the precious resources of our planet. (Malinge 2010c; emphasis in original)

Pastor Wilson, Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor, also used the idea of fulfilling God’s commandments to explain why evangelical Christians have a duty to be environmental stewards. He noted that for Christians, the “first and greatest commandment” given by Jesus is: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:36). According to Wilson, caring for creation is included in this command.

For many evangelicals, loving God means spending time in worship and prayer. This is foundational. But there is another way to express our love for God. Jesus tells us: “If you love me, keep my commands” (John 14:15). Loving God means caring about what happens to God’s creation because God cares about it and because God gave us the job of caring for it. We worship God by caring for creation. (Wilson 2011)

Wilson further suggested that people would be held accountable for how well they looked after the world that the Creator had left in their care.

Unitarian Universalism places much less emphasis on commandments and formally defined beliefs than Judaism and Christianity, however it does affirm Seven Principles that express the values of its members. The pastor of the First Universalist Church of Rockland cited the Seventh Principle, “recognition of the interdependent web of life of which we are all a part,” to explain how their religion affirmed the importance of environmentally sustainable behavior:

We hold up respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. In response to this principle we are called to live as people who respect the earth. We’re called to live as people who recognize the damage our technological shortsightedness has done—and will continue to do—to the earth until we radically transform our ways. We

recognize that we do nothing in isolation, that everything we do has an impact on our surroundings because we are interconnected. (Glovin 2010)

B. Earth is Sacred

In addition to citing the commandments as evidence that people have a religious duty to be environmental stewards, faith leaders emphasized that people ought to care for the world because it is sacred. Two themes appeared in teachings emphasizing the sanctity of the world. 1) The world is God's beloved creation and provides a means to interact with God. 2) Nature is a venue for religious development through spiritual experiences that occur outdoors and through moral lessons that can be drawn from examples in the natural environment.

1. Earth as God's Beloved Creation

As an example of the first theme, Pastor Wild explained that, "The garden offers opportunities to be a biblical witness. It's really symbiotic: it's something we do because we're guided by our Christian faith and we want to care for God's creation, but then the experiences in the garden reveal God's grace." Similarly, according to Rev. Ken Wilson:

We worship God by caring for creation. We don't worship creation. God created the world for his glory, and because of this, it reveals his glory to us:

LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory in the heavens. (Psalm 8:1) (Wilson 2011)

By carefully explaining that care for creation is a means of honoring the Creator, Wilson forestalls a traditional criticism of environmentalists as idolaters who worship nature. He bolsters his case by citing numerous biblical passages from the Book of Psalms and the Genesis story describing the wonders and beauty of the world, noting that these passages indicate God's love for the flora and fauna He created. Consequently, humans can become aware of the Creator through observation of nature and they have an obligation to protect the diverse creations with which they share the planet.

A subset of cases went farther than Wilson and described the natural environment as sacred because God is present within His creation. This theme was common in three of the women's monastic communities, where it emerged from study of theologians such as Bonaventure and Fr. Thomas Berry. The Sisters of St. Francis cited the idea of the "Cosmic Christ" as foundational to their mission to care for the earth. "The Cosmic Christ can be defined as that aspect of God which pervades all of creation, the Christ who "fills the universe in all its

parts” (Ephesians 1:23). According to Bonaventure, Christ, as the Word of God, is present in all things because of the passage in the Gospel of John in which “all things were made through him [the Word]” (John 1:3). Sr. Margaret Pirkl builds on this idea to advocate care for the earth.

Bonaventure’s teaching leads us to an almost incredible conclusion. Every leaf, cloud, fruit, animal, and person is to be seen as an outward expression of the Word of God in Love! Thus each creation has its own identity, integrity, and dignity. Each is sacred because it holds something of the Word of God, Christ, in a unique way.

Those who recognize that every thing that exists is sacred, are obligated to change the way they behave toward the physical world. As Pirkl commented,

If every being somehow carries the divine (the Cosmic Christ in the Franciscan tradition), every being is basically sacred. If we truly believed this, we would change our ways, be more thought-full, walk with a lighter step, and show our love and gratitude and concern for sister thrush, brother cloud, sister water, sister star, and the rest of the family. Such is the sometimes difficult but always life-giving challenge placed before Earth’s people and, especially, those of us who are Franciscan at heart. (Pirkl, undated)

Although Pirkl equates the Cosmic Christ with Franciscan teachings, Sr. Ginny Jones noted that Thomas Berry’s teachings about the cosmic creation story shared by humans and other beings was also important for framing sustainability as an issue of concern to the Sisters of St. Joseph. Her community takes its mission from the biblical message, “That all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; I pray that they may be one in Us” (John 17:21). Through the teachings of Berry, they determined that the idea “all are one” extended to all life on earth, not just humans, and therefore, their congregational mission to live and work “that all may be one” included care for the earth.

2. Nature as Place for Religious Development

Some faith leaders expressed the idea that nature was sacred and should be protected because it provided a means to become more aware of God or to develop one’s spiritual life. Sr. Mary David Walgenbach noted that Christianity has a long tradition of viewing nature as a vehicle for spiritual knowledge. For example, “in the writing of Clements, he says there are two books: the first is the book of life, which is Creation, and the second is the book of the scriptures.” To her, time in nature was one of the best ways to wake people up when modern, urban life left them numb:

If you’re dead inside then the hope is for relationships to wake you up. That includes relationships with people and with nature. Then you can get out in your dinghy boat and get out to where you can find life. That includes getting out into nature. You know, I feel so bad for the kids in cities who don’t get a chance to experience nature. People come out

here [to Holy Wisdom Monastery] and they just walk the land and they have a place to stay. Having a space in Creation helps them open up their interior space. (Walgenbach)

Sr. Ginny Jones, Congregation of St. Joseph of Nazareth, also thought time in nature was beneficial to people's spiritual lives because, "before formal religion existed, people encountered something of the holy in the natural world. And that something — that peace, solitude and wisdom — is what we believe people can still find here" at the Bow in the Woods Preserve (SWMLC 2007).

Along with the idea that exposure to nature can nurture people's spiritual lives, a number of faith leaders drew on experiences with nature to illustrate religious teachings. Although these illustrations were part of a larger body of teachings on faith-based morality and often were not specifically focused on promoting sustainability, they reinforced the idea that nature played a significant role in spiritual life. For example, Rev. Held described the importance of taking precautions to avoid polluting a lake during a camping trip to illustrate her message in a sermon on the interconnectedness of humans and nature:

I just did a sermon series on Psalm 8. I came back from spending time at a lake in Wisconsin and it inspired me to preach on God's grace and majesty and what it means to be human. What makes us unique is that we are co-creators. In South Africa, there is this idea of *ubuntu*, "I am human because I belong." Humanity is expressed through relationships with others. They also recognize their interconnectedness with nature, their relationships with the natural world. I pointed out that this means that if I pollute the lake with shampoo, I am harming it and not acting as a person who belongs to the lake.

Moral lessons could also be derived from nature without invoking God. Pastor Wild of the Madison Christian Community told the story of ten-year old Ruth, who participated in their Kids in the Garden program for children from a neighborhood center. One day, Ruth commented, "You can't lie to the earth. The earth knows when you are lying. I might tell you I watered, but the plants know I didn't. And they will tell that I didn't" (quoted in Wild and Bakken: 60). Even though Kids in the Garden was a secular program, Ruth's testimonial indicated to the faith community running the program that they were succeeding in their efforts to teach skills and values that would nurture both soil and soul.

It is notable that faith leaders who regularly spent time in outdoor activities were the most likely to incorporate their experiences with nature into religious teachings. Rev. Wild commented that his congregation appreciated stories from the church garden:

People resonate with illustrations of stories about the land and chickens. I talked about “hen love” instead of the fox love of Herod. That’s good theology. It’s an opportunity to preach about powerless love that can overcome loveless power.

Clergy and lay spiritual teachers found opportunities for reflecting on lessons from nature while gardening, camping, canoeing, walking dogs, visiting the seashore, doing ecological restoration work on monastery grounds, and gazing out a church office window where native plants were gradually greening a restored prairie after a controlled burn to remove invasive species. By sharing their experiences, they raised community awareness of connections between faith and nature and encouraged community members to see the environment as a venue for spiritual practice.

C. Sacred Place

Among the communities that engaged in land stewardship activities, faith leaders described their properties as sacred places where the community grounds had become part of their religious work. For example, the Sisters of the Humility of Mary consider the grounds at Villa Maria to be “A sacred place where God’s abundant life unfolds.” For Sr. Barbara O’Donnell “the spirituality of the land is so real” at Villa Maria that she feels a deep obligation to be a good environmental steward of that land. When she and other sisters with an interest in environmental ministry walked the boundaries of their property with the land manager, “It was so awesome—to stand in the woods and realize what a responsibility we have to care for them.” That sense of responsibility could also include the idea that a piece of land had come to the community as a gift from God, which meant that they had a special religious duty to care for it. Construction of the Madison Christian Community became possible when two farmers who were selling land to developers set aside six acres to be used for building a church. The fledgling faith community developed a strong sense of responsibility to be stewards of this “gift of land,” which they saw as coming from God.

Being associated with a religious organization added to the sense of sanctity ascribed to the lands in these cases. As Paul Boutwell, land manager at Holy Wisdom Monastery commented, “all land is sacred. But it does make a difference—what the land is being used for. It affects the way people see it and what they feel when they are there.” He noted that visiting the monastery was different from visiting the neighboring park:

People see the land differently. They come in past the sign that says “Holy Wisdom Monastery” and that affects their perceptions of how to behave and what the land means. It’s a different experience than going into “Governor Nelson Park.” Naming matters. Calling something a “park” tells you something about what you expect there.

But even more than the name, Boutwell believed that the way land is cared for and used affects the way people feel when they visit it: “It’s something that you know when you walk on a piece of land that someone has cared for--there is a sense of the soul of the land and person that you connect to.” Thus, places like Holy Wisdom, where the land is being restored to native prairie and savanna and people gather for spiritual activities, becomes a special place that feels sacred to those who spend time there.

2. SOCIAL JUSTICE

Faith leaders across all cases cited religious obligations to pursue social justice to explain why people of faith needed to address environmental crises. Christian leaders invoked the foundational teaching that requires Christians to “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:39) to explain why sustainability was a faith issue. As Rev. Wilson explained,

Loving my neighbor, according to the parable [of the Good Samaritan], includes responding to the needs of someone who has been hurt. We are to feed him, clothe him, care for his wounds and provide for him.... Nothing could be clearer than Jesus’ words in Matthew 25:36-44. Jesus tells his disciples that on Judgment Day, we will stand before God and answer for the way we treated those who were hungry, naked and sick, and for those who were strangers and prisoners: “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” (v. 40). And, on the other hand, Jesus says, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me” (v. 45).

There are millions of suffering people in the world, and thousands of Christians who offer them assistance. Unfortunately, the realities of climate change mean that those suffering millions may become billions. All of us who follow Jesus will need to respond. (Wilson 2011: 11)

Environmental activities were also perceived as extensions of community social justice missions among the women monastics. At Villa Maria, Sr. Barbara O’Donnell framed environmental issues as social justice issues in her role as a spiritual teacher leading community programs focused on faith and sustainability. She described connections between her identity as a Sister of the Humility of Mary and her calling to environmental education because her work developing the gardens and environmental ministries fit with the Sisters’ mission to bring “more abundant life to God’s people, especially those who are poor.” Thus, the programs were designed

so that large portions of the produce from the gardens and the farm were donated to local food pantries and the environmental education programs offered opportunities for low-income children to spend time in nature. Often, in these communities of religious women, statements framing sustainability as a component of the community's justice work emerged from study groups or committees rather than from the teaching of one specific faith leader. Thus, for example, the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia state:

We engage in Corporate Social Responsibility in order to fulfill the congregation's mission to "direct our corporate resources to the promotion of justice, peace, and reconciliation" and thereby to effect change toward social and environmental justice. (osfphila.org)

Once the Sisters of St. Francis adopted their environmental initiative, those charged with fulfilling the organization's Corporate Social Responsibility work began incorporating the environment into their justice work. Representatives of the order would attend shareholder meetings for corporations in which they held stock and present resolutions requesting the corporations to do more analysis of financial risks related to investments in hydraulic fracturing or provide better regulation of work conditions and environmental impacts at supply-chain companies with facilities located in developing countries.

Jewish faith leaders also spoke of the connections between environmental issues and social inequities, noting that the effects of pollution and climate change fall disproportionately on the poor and on future generations. Rabbi Epstein described her awakening to awareness of how the environmental damage caused by past generations affects the young when her infant daughter was tested for lead exposure. Such testing is mandatory for all children in New Jersey, which has widespread pollution issues due to its long manufacturing history. Epstein incorporated this personal experience into a broader message calling on her congregation to become Protectors of the Earth because of unjust harm to the planet, the poor, and future generations:

God can be heard from the atmosphere, calling out to us to be *shomrei adamah* [protectors of earth]. God can be heard in the voices of the poor on our Earth—the poor who are most affected by all of this—calling out to us to be *shomrei adamah*. God's voice can be heard in our own children, calling out to us to be *shomrei adamah*. (Epstein RH 2nd Day 5771/2010)

The rabbis defined sustainability as a social justice issue by linking it to the Jewish tradition's foundational social justice teaching of *tikkun olam*, "repairing the world," and the various practices through which their communities were already working to make the world

whole. At the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation in Evanston, Rabbi Rosen summed up the connections saying:

JRC has always considered itself committed to *tikkun olam*, to making the world better, and environmentalism is just part of a larger vision that we don't accept the world at face value. Reconstructionism teaches that the world is as yet not fully created. We are G-d's partners in creation and that is what it means to be a Jew, and it is a very sacred enterprise. Making and remaking the world, creating and recreating the world and repairing the world in the places it needs to be repaired, whether working in a soup kitchen, marching in a rally for immigrant rights or building a new building in a green way, it's all a part of the same ultimate sacred tradition. (Quoted in Yearwood: 11)

Rosen not only connected the green building project with the overarching Jewish value of *tikkun olam*, he linked it to specific ministry efforts that his community had undertaken in the past. This connection integrated sustainability into the faith community's extant practice of social justice.

Reverend Glovin followed a similar approach by placing his church's environmental work in the context of their local social justice ministries:

Our work in founding and supporting AIO³ in feeding the hungry in our community; the Unitarian Universalist movement to teach healthy human sexuality; our movement to welcome gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, to ordain them to ministry, to bless their marriages; our movement to confront racism and the legacies of colonialism—each of these efforts seeks to heal massive social and spiritual wounds whose deepest roots lie in the soil of humanity's great turning away from right relationship with the earth. (2010)

3. SPECIAL ROLE OF RELIGION IN ADDRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Some faith leaders emphasized that faith communities had a special role to play in helping the wider society respond to environmental issues. In doing so, they emphasized two themes. First, there is a history of religious voices challenging unjust social systems and, second, people of faith are known for taking on difficult tasks and working to make the world a better place.

Rabbi Rosen, a strong proponent of faith-based social justice work, provides an example of the idea that religion can promote sustainability by challenging the status quo:

In this, I believe our religious communities have a critical role to play. As the popular saying goes, religious communities don't only exist to comfort the afflicted, they also exist to afflict the comfortable. Hasn't this been the job of religion at its best from time immemorial? To warn against the deification of human power? To affirm that no matter how powerful we may become, there will always be a Power greater than even our own?

³ Area Interfaith Outreach is a food pantry for midcoast Maine

To remind leaders and nations that in the end, it is not by might and not by power that God's world will be sustained?

For the Jewish community, [Rosh Hashanah] is a season of new beginnings, of new opportunity, new hope. If this will be a truly new year, it will not just be up to our leaders to make it so—it will be up to us as Americans, as people of faith, as communities of conscience—to do what we must to promote a vision of sustainability in our country. (Rosen, RH 5769/Oct. 2008)

Pastor Wilson (2007) sounded a similar theme, noting that Christianity can counter entrenched social systems: “God’s creation is being plundered and the gospel is the answer because it has power to transform hearts, confront powers that be and change the course of history.”

In addition to “confronting power” other faith leaders echoed Wilson’s conviction that religion could transform hearts and minds, which would help people live more environmentally sustainable lives. Abbot John Klassen, of St. John’s Abbey, commented that, “To really understand and live environmental sustainability requires a fundamental conversion: of thought, of the ordering of our values and desires, of our understanding, and of practice.” In an interview with a reporter, the abbot described three themes of humility, stability, and frugality in the rule of St. Benedict that could provide the basis for a shift in values that would prepare Catholics to live more sustainably:

[H]umility puts us in right relationship with God and the planet, underscoring our radical dependence. Stability creates the conditions needed to have a greater awareness of the environment in which we live. And frugality helps to undermine what Abbot John called “the dominant culture of consumerism” that insists that we use too many of the earth’s resources for our lives. (CRL 2014)

Faith leaders also stressed that being people of faith equipped their communities for the difficult task of making the world more sustainable. Rabbi Malingner expressed this idea for his Jewish community in a New Year’s sermon:

We Jews never give up hope and belief in our capacity to change ourselves and change the world. Even if something seems utterly inevitable, we pray, we act, we behave as if we can alter the outcome. This is what it means to be God’s partners in creation. On this Rosh Hashanah, this New Year, we have potential in a very real way to save the world. (Malingner 2010c)

Similarly, Rev. Mark Glovin, First Universalist Church of Rockland, suggested that Unitarian Universalism provided its members with valuable preparation for building a more sustainable society. Rather than relying on technology, he suggested that the key to mitigating climate change was to recognize that “we are our brother’s and sister’s keepers and that it’s time to take better care of each other,” a task for which their years of social justice work had trained them:

This is why Unitarian Universalist Congregations like ours and a thousand others are so necessary in this moment. Because we know how to work together amidst amazing diversity, know how to focus on what connects us instead of what separates us, know how to build bridges across vast difference. This is the work to which we are called. (2010)

Throughout these pastoral messages, there was a recurrent theme emphasizing sustainability as part of a larger religious vision in which people of faith were called to build a better world. In this context, environmental stewardship became a component of the tradition's mission of healing the world, establishing the Kingdom of God, or building the beloved community.⁴ Thus for example, Rabbi Malinger (2010c) described sustainability as a facet of the traditional Jewish mission to heal the world: "As the midrash states, we are partners in God's glorious universe, here to repair, protect, and perfect the world." Rev. Glovin of First Universalist Church also described environmental activities as part of an overarching vision of the new earth that his faith community felt called to create:

We are called to engage in bringing forth an environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling and socially just human presence on this planet. We're not here to find a magic bullet. There is no magic bullet... but there is hope that together we can forge a new way. Socrates said: "The secret of change is to focus your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new."... When we see our members and friends picking up their CSA veggies on a sunny summer morning, we are witnessing the building of the new earth. When we institute composting and recycling and energy-saving devices at our church, we are witnessing the building of a new earth. (Glovin 2010)

Rev. Wild suggested that equating sustainability with the positive vision of a long-range religious objective was necessary in order to sustain members' commitment to stewardship efforts. Although early environmental activities at the Madison Christian Community focused on energy conservation and installation of solar panels in an effort to address concerns about climate change, Wild's framing of environmental stewardship as a faith issue soon broadened beyond climate. He shifted his message of environmental ministry to emphasize positive goals of land stewardship and building community instead of the "negative" goal of mitigating the worst

⁴ The phrase "healing the world," refers to the Jewish vision of creating an ideal society that adheres to religious ethics. Christians have a similar vision of transforming earth into "the Kingdom of God." Martin Luther King Jr. popularized a vision of "the beloved community" as a society in which poverty and racism are eliminated and all people share earth's resources. Dr. King's vision has been adopted by many US religious groups, including Unitarian Universalists.

effects of climate change. He did not make this change to devalue the issue of climate change, but rather because the multi-year projects of his community required a different type of message.

Acting on the basis of positive affirmation is an alternative to fear-driven motives to “save the world.” Fear-driven motives—though justifiable given the grave condition of creation—are difficult to sustain, for avoiding disaster is the best we can hope for. (Wild and Bakken 2009: 42)

Framing environmental efforts as part of a positive religious vision may have helped sustain people’s participation. Research has demonstrated that fear-based appeals for action in response to climate change are unlikely to have long-lasting impacts because the initial sense of urgency soon declines (Lowe et al. 2006), an effect that may be exacerbated because climate change is a complex problem that many Americans perceive as distant in time and space (Lorenzoni et al. 2007). Some scholars have suggested that “nonthreatening imagery and icons that link to individuals’ everyday emotions and concerns” may be more effective than fear for motivating genuine personal engagement with climate change (O’Neill and Nicholson-Cole 2009). Incorporating environmental activities into the ministry work of a religious community conforms to this recommendation. Religions have well-established traditions of engaging in activities that contribute to long-term pursuit of a distant ideal goal. Although centuries of effort have not yet succeeded in creating a perfectly just and peaceful society, people of faith continue striving to make the world a better place. Thus, in contrast to actions taken out of fear, Rev. Wilson theorized that people of faith could draw on their sense of hope for the world in order to motivate climate action among themselves and in the wider society.

[T]he gospel prepares us to face the future with hope. And hope is in even shorter supply than energy these days. Those who are in touch with the global environmental crisis—the rampant pollution, the millions of people without any access to clean water, the global poor who will be hit hard by the widespread effects of climate change—are hard pressed to be hopeful. We can join this effort and bring our hope with us, the hope of a gospel that is truly good news on a global scale. (Wilson 2007)

FOSTERING AN INTENTION TO ENGAGE IN EARTH CARE

Comparison of the messages through which faith leaders called on their communities to work toward creating a more environmentally sustainable society indicates that three elements contributed to the efficacy of their messages (see Table 8.3). First, they legitimated sustainability as a faith issue by grounding it in a religious tradition’s core theologies. Second, they connected

sustainability to their faith community’s identity. Third, they emphasized the special role that faith communities could play in creating social change.

Table 8.3 Elements Contributing to the Efficacy of Faith Leader Messages

Message Themes	Benefits
Ground sustainability in core theologies	Legitimated sustainability as a faith issue
Connect sustainability with community mission/identity	Defined sustainability as an area of community action
Special role of faith communities	Made actions accessible to community members

Ground Sustainability in Core Theologies

As the quotes from sermons and blogs cited earlier make clear, faith leaders legitimated sustainability as a faith issue by grounding it in core theological teachings of their religious traditions. These teachings were affected by denominational affiliations. Jewish rabbis emphasized the relationship between earth care and the ethic of *tikkun olam*, healing the world. Mainline Protestant and Catholic faith leaders connected environmental issues with social justice. Rev. Ken Wilson framed his call for a Christian response to climate change as a means to love and obey God by fulfilling divine commandments, thereby connecting it to the evangelical emphasis on personal relationships with God. Pastor Glovin stressed the need for actions that were consistent with the Seventh Principle of Unitarian Universalism, which affirms “the interconnected web of life.” By invoking these core teachings, which the communities already understood to be central to their religious traditions, the faith leaders provided a solid foundation for establishing the legitimacy of sustainability as a faith issue.

Connect Sustainability with Community Identity

In addition to providing a solid theological foundation for earth care as a precept incumbent on people of faith, clergy and lay faith teachers in these cases framed sustainability as an issue that connected with the identity of their specific faith communities because it was directly connected to the ministry work they already did. Hence, sustainability was not simply incumbent on Jews, Unitarian Universalists, or Christians in general, it was incumbent on members of that particular faith community because it was tied to their community values and the ministries through which they enacted those values. The rabbis stressed the alignment of sustainability with social justice work that already formed the core of their specific communities’ service activities, such as providing food to the poor or advocating for improvements in

immigration policy. Rev. Glovin noted that sustainability fit into the First Universalist Church of Rockland's long-standing vision of creating a just society, which they worked toward by advocating for marriage equality and supporting programs to alleviate poverty. The mission of the Green Committee at St Thomas Aquinas Parish described its sustainability initiative as a continuation of preexisting ministries focused on care for disadvantaged people, a connection made explicit when the chair of the Human Concerns Committee that addressed local poverty issues also served as chair for the Green Committee.

For the monastic communities, sustainability was legitimated when faith leaders linked it to the *charism*, or mission, that was foundational to each community's identity. At Saint John's Abbey and Holy Wisdom Monastery, in addition to general Benedictine values such as stability, faith leaders in both communities identified community-specific values that legitimated sustainability. For Saint John's Abbey, that meant connecting to their heritage as caretakers of the forest where their predecessors had planted evergreens grown lovingly from seed. For Holy Wisdom, it meant deciding that there was a reason they had repeatedly refused to sell their land to developers and reframing that decision so that "no sale" became the basis for "care of this land is part of our mission as a faith community." As Franciscans, faith leaders at Our Lady of Angels legitimated sustainability by invoking St. Francis, the patron saint of ecology who addressed earth, sun, and animals as brethren. Thus, all of creation are seen as brother and sister, and care for the earth connected with previous social justice work focused on care for the poorest members of the human family. For the Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth, sustainability came to be understood as part of their mission to live and work in order that "all may be one" once faith leaders articulated the idea that "all" included all of creation, not just human beings. At Villa Maria, lay faith leaders developed the idea that there were connections between humus and their core value of humility. Care for the garden *humus* from which food grew had special meaning for the Sisters of the *Humility* of Mary, who could use their land to produce food, spiritual retreats, and educational benefits through which to fulfill their mission to "bring more abundant life to God's people, especially the poor."

Defining sustainability as a religious issue laid the foundation for calling people of faith to engage in environmental activities, however, it did not necessarily require that those activities be undertaken through a faith community. Individuals could have taken action by joining secular environmental organizations or making changes to behavior in their homes and workplaces.

Therefore, connecting sustainability to faith community identity and linking it with extant missions was important for defining earth care as an area of action to be undertaken within the religious organization. Thus, this aspect of the faith leader messages conveyed an expectation that members of the congregation would adopt sustainable behaviors and that those behaviors would be integrated into the practices of the religious organization, with participation and support from the congregation.

Special Contributions of Faith Communities

The call to community-based action was further strengthened by the message that faith communities could make special contributions to the campaign to create a more sustainable society through their role as voices of morality and justice. This message made earth care accessible; it suggested that individuals did not need expertise in science or engineering to take action, they could do important work by changing hearts and minds. By citing historical examples of instances in which people of faith provided moral leadership during times of social change, faith leaders furthered the perception that sustainability was a faith issue that their communities should and could address. In the process, they motivated members to take action and increased congregational support for initiatives.

Thus, by grounding sustainability to core theologies, connecting it to community identity, and arguing that people of faith had special contributions to make in the movement to build a more sustainable society, faith leaders legitimated earth care as a faith issue that required action from their community members. In the process, they created an implicit definition of a sustainability ethic: to protect people and ecosystems from pollution and the effects of climate change and to interact with the environment in ways that would restore balance to the natural order. In other words, they defined sustainability as an expression of moral behavior, to be achieved by living in accord with ethical precepts that define what it means to be in right relationship with God (for theistic traditions), other human beings, and the environment.

Once earth care was defined as a faith issue, many community members felt a desire to take action. Lynn Cameron, a lay faith leader at Trinity Presbyterian Church, described the importance of faith messages for motivating action for members of the Earth Care House Church:

We started with the biblical foundations and I think it was important to get clear that those foundations were there.... But then people wanted to do something. It is not enough to be against things, we needed to be for things. A lot of environmental work starts with being against something. But, what are you for? I guess, for us, it's the idea of sustainability.... Once the theology was inside us, we could act on our faith.

Thus, by presenting sustainability as an area for community activity, faith leaders played an important role in establishing sustainability as a new social norm, an area of activity that members were expected to support and participate in. How deeply sustainability became embedded in the social norms of each community was affected by the actions faith leaders took to present these religious messages and express support for initiatives. The next chapter examines the mechanisms through which faith leaders took action and contributed to the development of the initiatives.

Chapter 9

FAITH LEADERS Mechanisms for Legitimizing Sustainability

[Reverend] Ann has been great about weaving earth care into the services. She does that too often to count.

Judy Lepera, Trinity Presbyterian Church

INTRODUCTION

As the previous chapter described, faith leaders played an important role in the development of sustainability initiatives by presenting the message that earth care was a faith issue that required a response from their community. These messages sought to influence members' attitudes toward sustainability in order to motivate them to take action. Thus, faith leaders advocated for adoption of sustainability as a social norm, an expected behavior, for members of their communities. How well they succeeded in embedding sustainability in the social norms of their congregations was affected by the mechanisms through which they promoted earth care. Those mechanisms shaped the actions available, however the choice of actions was further influenced by personal motivations and by interactions between faith leaders and their congregations, both of which will be examined toward the end of the chapter.

MECHANISMS FOR PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY

To promote sustainability initiatives, faith leaders employed an array of mechanisms related to their dual roles as religious authorities and organizational managers (see Table 9.1). As religious authorities, clergy used sermons to convey messages to the whole community. In addition, lay faith leaders participated in study groups, where they led explorations of religious teachings and developed resources for sharing the idea of faith-based sustainability with the wider community. Some leaders also used newsletter articles or blogs to share religious reflections or keep the wider community updated on various projects. Alongside these

intellectual presentations, which articulated connections between sustainability and religious values, faith leaders encouraged engagement with earth care by making it a visible part of community religious practice. They did this through affirmations, in the form of announcements and celebrations of environmental actions, and by developing rituals related to earth care.

In their role as organizational managers, faith leaders helped implement initiatives. They authorized the creation of initiatives and advised champions about ways to incorporate sustainability into religious practices and organizational systems. They also advocated for support of initiatives from administrative boards and other committees within the religious organization.

Table 9.1 Mechanisms for Promoting Sustainability

Faith Leader Role	Mechanism	Number of Cases
1. Religious Authority	Sermons	11
	Study groups	10
	Blogs, newsletters	7
	Public affirmations	10
	Rituals	10
2. Organizational Management	Authorize initiatives	12
	Advise champions	3
	Advocate for community support	4

1. MECHANISMS RELATED TO RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY

Because the purpose of a faith community is to foster members’ religious lives and promote moral behavior, proposed activities must be understood to contribute to the organization’s religious mission. In their role as religious authorities responsible for interpreting religious beliefs and practices, faith leaders had the necessary authority to legitimate sustainability as a faith issue that required a response from the community. They conveyed this message through a variety of mechanisms that were available to them as clergy and, to a lesser extent, as lay leaders. Among the fifteen cases, faith leaders made use of sermons, study groups, newsletters, affirmations, and rituals to encourage their communities to adopt sustainability as a new area of activity.

Sermons

As the numerous homiletic quotes in the section on Chapter 8 indicate, sermons were a prominent mechanism through which faith leaders promoted sustainability as a faith issue.

Sermons are a natural venue for encouraging development of new social norms; pastors use sermons to link traditional religious teachings with current circumstances and issue injunctions regarding individual and congregational behavior. Thus, sermons were an especially effective means of promoting sustainability as a faith issue because members attended them with an expectation that the pastor, who was an authority on religion, would provide information about connections between faith traditions and emergent social concerns. Sermons also had the advantage of reaching the majority of the community since they were central to the worship rituals for which the members gathered each week.

Clergy in nine of the ten non-monastic cases and two monasteries presented homilies with environmental themes. The previous chapter provided examples of passages from sermons in the non-monastic communities. Similarly, care for the earth was a regular topic at Holy Wisdom Monastery, where various speakers took turns providing sermons during the Sunday Assembly and the abbot of Saint John's Abbey occasionally preached about connections between sustainability and Benedictine traditions. In contrast, women interviewed at the three Catholic convents that relied on priests to perform mass did not mention homilies as a source of information about faith-based sustainability.

Annual liturgical cycles affected the size of the audience exposed to homiletic messages. Ann Cohen commented that Rabbi Epstein "was a big factor in bringing the issue to the congregation through the pulpit" at Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple:

She spoke from the Bimah [podium] several times and she even did a sermon during High Holy Days when the house was packed. She did periodic sermons throughout the GreenFaith certification process.

By speaking about sustainability during one of the major holidays, Rabbi Epstein reached a greater number of community members than she could have during a regular Sabbath service.

Study Groups

Study groups served as mechanisms for lay faith leaders to share messages about earth care as a faith issue. In the three Catholic women's convents, where the sisters rely on local priests to lead Sunday mass, study groups were more important than sermons for presenting connections between sustainability and faith traditions. In these cases, sisters who were sustainability champions participated in study groups during mission discernment processes, where they introduced other sisters to texts that explained theological bases for earth care.

Study groups also provided an opportunity for laity in non-monastic cases to develop earth care messages that they used in their roles as sustainability champions when they proposed initiatives to their communities. Laity organized Bible studies to explore the scriptural context for sustainability as part of Green Vineyard and the Trinity Earth Shepherds (Trinity Presbyterian Church, East Brunswick). Study was also central to the Earth Care House Church at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg VA, where lay faith leaders organized study of theological and inspirational texts every year as part of their house church mission. Similarly, the idea for building a green synagogue at the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation came from an Environmental Task Force study group that had been founded by laity interested in exploring connections between Judaism and environmental issues. In each of these cases, the study group provided a community of interest in which people explored religious teachings that legitimated sustainability as a faith issue, thereby enhancing their ability to present earth care proposals in ways that would motivate congregational support. Lynn Cameron described the effects of theological study in the Earth Care House Church:

In the early environmental movement, there used to be an anti-environment sentiment in churches—people said the resources were there for us to use. There was that idea that humans were given dominion over the creation. It was really helpful for me to have knowledge of theology so I could articulate a response to that. I needed to know what I could say that's based in the Bible. That helped get people to think differently so all that reading was really helpful.

Newsletter Articles and Blogs

Some faith leaders included sustainability messages in newsletter articles and blogs, often in response to a particular event such as a holy day, an environmental activity at the house of worship, or a campaign to enlist member support for a project. Thus, for example, leaders seeking to encourage integration of environmental behavior into the daily lives of community members might use the religious calendar to talk about specific practices. Ann Cohen described how effectively one of the rabbis at Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple used newsletter articles to connect environmentally sustainable practices with Jewish holiday traditions:

During the GreenFaith certification process, Rabbi Epstein would do a piece on how each holiday connects to the environment. Like Passover—lots of people do cleaning at that holiday so she talked about the savings that come with homemade cleaning products.

Environmental activities at houses of worship also provided occasions for messages about faith and sustainability. Watching the dramatic changes in the prairie at the Madison

Christian Community, as it re-grew after a controlled burn to remove invasive species and stimulate fire-adapted native plants, inspired Pastor Ticia Brown to write several prairie-themed entries for her weekly blog. During construction of the new building for the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation, Rabbi Rosen posted a Construction Diary blog with entries that included photos and explanations of green features as they were added to the building. For example, in Construction Diary #26 (posted Nov. 16, 2007), the rabbi wrote:

The next two pix [sic] down show our building's white reflective roof. Most homes and buildings in America, in fact, are built with dark roofs that absorb heat, forcing air conditioners to work up to 20% longer and use a fifth more power. JRC's reflective roof will help our air conditioning system to work more efficiently, especially during peak usage hours. The small domed items on the second pic [sic] down are Solartube skylights that will let natural light into our kitchen.

In some of these blog posts, Rabbi Rosen articulated connections between Judaism and sustainability, explaining that, "our new synagogue building is a green shul [synagogue], having been built according to sacred Jewish values of environmental sustainability" (Diary, Feb. 6 2008). He also described how the building served as an expression of the JRC community's values. One story that illustrates this connection recounts how the children contributed to the construction project:

We discovered last year that the soil on our property was soft and sandy—definitely not suitable for supporting a large three-story building. This necessitated drilling of [eighteen] caissons: concrete pillars driven deep into the ground that will serve to stabilize the structure... Just before the caisson drilling commenced, our congregation's president, Alan Saposnik, came up with an inspired idea. Since we are constructing pillars to support our congregation, why not create eighteen symbolic "pillars" of our community—spiritual values that we could somehow connect to the physical caissons?

I took Alan's idea to our 4th and 7th grade religious school students... What, I asked our students, would you consider to be the eighteen "pillars" upon which our congregational community stands?

Then together we brainstormed eighteen spiritual values of our JRC community: God, Judaism, Joy, Prayer, Hope, Respect, Partnership, Song, Tikkun Olam, Community, Study, Freedom, Friendship, Spirit, Learning, Peace, Growth, and Love. Afterwards, I wrote out the values on separate pieces of paper and each one was placed by the construction crew into a separate caisson shaft to be mixed together with the concrete, becoming a permanent part of JRC's support structure. (Diary #2)

Public Affirmations

In addition to defining environmental issues as faith issues through religious teaching, faith leaders legitimated sustainability initiatives by affirming the importance of the activities

undertaken by sustainability champions in their communities. These “affirmations” were actions that called attention to sustainability efforts such as making announcements to remind the community of upcoming events, celebrating accomplishments during worship services, and mentioning the community’s environmental efforts in venues such as denominational and interfaith meetings.

Clergy often demonstrated their support for community greening efforts by reminding people of upcoming activities and encouraging them to get involved. One member of the Green Team at Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple noted that although the senior rabbi left responsibility for green sermons to the junior rabbi, he actively supported the congregation’s GreenFaith certification program by publicizing the project: “He’s good about advertising events. The whole issue of our becoming GreenFaith certified was brought to people’s attention on Fridays” during the regular Friday evening worship services (Asher).

Faith leaders further affirmed the value of sustainability efforts by celebrating their community’s accomplishments. In all four green-certified communities, the pastors organized Sabbath worship services to mark their attainment of certification as a green congregation. During these celebrations, they commended the Green Teams for their work, reiterated messages connecting earth care with the community’s religious values, and emphasized that completion of the process was a beginning, not an end, to the community’s sustainability initiative. Celebrations with sustainability themes also marked completion of green construction or renovation projects, installation of solar panels, spring planting and fall harvests in community gardens, and relief work in areas damaged by major storms.

Celebration of accomplishments often included personal affirmations in which faith leaders expressed their appreciation for the work individuals did. These personal affirmations were especially important when individuals felt that their efforts were not having a significant impact on the wider community. For example, at Anshe Emeth, Rabbi Miller reassured the Green Team that the Interfaith Earth Day program they organized was important even if few members of the congregation had attended. Ann Cohen described how the rabbi affirmed the value of their accomplishment: “But our rabbi says it’s not about numbers. He says that if you put together a good program and only a few people come, those people will talk about it and others will wish they had been there.”

In addition to activity reminders and celebrations within the community, some faith leaders further supported their community sustainability efforts through affirmations that took place outside the congregation. The Earth Care House Church members attributed much of their success to the support they received from their minister and noted that one way she helped them was through publicly affirming the importance of their work. According to Lynn Cameron, “She shows us off at mission meetings and tells people about the work we are doing.” By mentioning the Earth Care group as an example of the good work going on at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Rev. Ann Held reinforced the importance of earth care as an expression of her church’s religious mission.

Rituals

Rituals served as another mechanism through which faith leaders conveyed the idea that environmental actions were aspects of religious practice. Some faith leaders led rituals to highlight specific environmental activities either during special ceremonies or by incorporating nature-themed rituals into regular worship services. Special ceremonies drew congregation members outdoors to witness green accomplishments such as installation of solar panels or restoration of ecosystems and provided as opportunity to reinforce the value of those activities. When Abbot Jerome Thiessen (eighth abbot) participated in a dedication ceremony for the restored wetlands at Saint John’s Abbey, he gave a brief sermon in which he described stewardship as the guiding principle in the way the abbey managed its lands (MN DNR 1990), thereby establishing a theme that would be continued by the abbots who succeeded him.

Earth-care rituals could also be incorporated into the regular rhythm of faith-community worship. In congregations with community gardens, clergy and nuns often blessed the gardens when they were planted in the spring and offered thanksgiving prayers during fall harvest season. Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor developed a harvest ritual in which two young members would carry garden produce up the center aisle and place it at the front of the church where the minister would offer a prayer of gratitude. At First Parish Church of Newbury, summer services were held in an outdoor “chapel” comprised of a circle of benches in a shady arbor between the church building and the community garden. Through these actions, faith leaders raised the visibility of their community’s environmental activities and reinforced the idea that earth care should be considered a form of religious practice.

2. MECHANISMS RELATED TO ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT

In their roles as chief executives for religious organizations, faith leaders had opportunities to encourage adoption of sustainability as an organizational priority. In non-monastic communities, senior clergy stand at the top of a congregation's organizational structure. Although they have boards and leadership committees to assist them, in most congregations pastors have considerable influence on board decisions. As one congregation member noted, "We have a volunteer board so it's not very authoritative; the people only serve for three years but the ministers are permanent members." In other words, pastors have managerial authority over term-limited volunteers. Monastic communities have a variety of leadership structures but all of them assign authority to specific leaders who manage their organizations. The abbot at Saint John's Abbey stands at the top of the abbey administrative hierarchy, with a council to provide advice on organizational decisions. Holy Wisdom Monastery has a prioress who makes decisions in consultation with the other sisters and a lay advisory board. The three Catholic women's communities have elected leadership teams that serve for specific terms, usually about five years, and are charged with the duty of implementing mission priorities that have been developed by their faith communities.

In the case studies, faith leaders drew on their authority as organizational managers to promote sustainability in several ways. First, they authorized activities by individuals and affinity groups interested in exploring connections between faith and environment. Second, they provided advice to assist affinity groups seeking to integrate sustainability into spiritual practices or take action in response to environmental concerns. Third, they advocated for support of initiatives from boards of directors and other groups within the community.

Authorization of Sustainability Initiatives

As chief executives, faith leaders authorized development of sustainability initiatives either by supporting enrollment in external green programs or by empowering their own communities to examine sustainability as a possible area of action. In the four green-certified cases, clergy expressed support for the idea of enrolling in certification programs during board meetings, thereby prompting congregational participation. The pastors at Trinity Presbyterian Church in East Brunswick and First Parish Church of Newbury encouraged their communities to engage in the mission discernment processes that led to adoption of earth care as a core focus. At

St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, the senior pastor gave permission for the establishment of a Green Committee to lead participation in the bishop's greening initiative and the ministers of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg and the Madison Christian Community endorsed formation of groups dedicated to earth care.

In the monastic cases, administrative leaders authorized formation of task forces to examine how earth care intersected with community missions. At Saint John's Abbey, the abbot approved a task force to examine whether an arboretum would be of value to the religious and educational missions of the community. At Villa Maria, the leadership team allowed Sr. Barbara O'Donnell to experiment with organic gardening and eco-spirituality programming while also granting permission for a task force to study how the order's mission intersected with environmental issues. At Nazareth, it was the leadership team itself that asked Sr. Ginny Jones to develop eco-spirituality programs for the Sisters of St. Joseph. Leadership teams for Holy Wisdom Monastery and Our Lady of Angels also authorized examination of the relationship between earth care and their community missions during formal mission discernment processes focused on evaluating options for their future ministry work.

Advising Sustainability Champions

When individuals in non-monastic cases developed a desire to address environmental concerns through the venue of their faith communities, they often consulted their pastors for ideas about how to take action. At the Vineyard Church, Phil Brabbs asked Rev. Wilson what he could do to act on the pastor's message that Christians have a responsibility to care for God's creation. It was Wilson who suggested that Brabbs form a small group that would combine scriptural study and environmental activities. At the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation, the Environmental Task Force began as a study group in which people gathered to examine connections between faith and sustainability. When they felt a desire to take action and incorporate Jewish environmentalism into their spiritual lives, they turned to Rabbi Rosen for advice. He suggested that they could organize annual Tu B'Shevat services for the congregation and put them in touch with Rabbi Fred Dobbs, a Jewish environmental leader, who could serve as a resource for them. When members of Trinity's Earth Care House Church were agonizing over the enormous challenge of protecting Shenandoah National Park from acid rain, it was Rev.

Ann Held who suggested they leverage the power of their denomination's national membership by presenting a resolution at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

In these examples, Faith Leader and Organizational domains intersected. Clergy drew on their knowledge of the structures and practices in their religious organizations to advise environmental affinity groups about potential paths of action. Rev. Wilson helped Phil Brabbs start Green Vineyard using a small-group format that was already well-established at his church. Rabbi Rosen provided information about how to incorporate environmental themes into Jewish spiritual practices by fitting it into the worship cycle of the Jewish liturgical calendar. And Rev. Held shared information about resources available to the house church through their congregation's membership in a national denomination, thereby prompting the Earth Care group to pursue a new course of action.

Advocating for Community Support

In several cases, clergy facilitated development of initiatives by encouraging community groups such as boards of trustees or committees to support the community's earth care efforts. In two cases, pastors requested that their congregational board of trustees (or directors) act on sustainability initiatives. Clergy who made these requests combined their authority as interpreters of religion with their stature as chief administrators to argue that the organization's administrative board had a moral obligation to adopt policies that were consistent with the community's faith values. Rabbi Rosen demonstrated the persuasive power of combined religious and administrative authority at the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation, where he offered environmentally themed prayers at the beginning of each board meeting to endorse the idea of incorporating Jewish environmental values into his congregation's decisions about how to address their need for a new building.

A similar combination of religious and managerial authority was evident in the processes through which the board at the Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor adopted sustainability as a guiding principle for the religious organization. The spiritual mission of the Vineyard Church was shaped by the leadership of Ken Wilson, the founding pastor. When he became concerned about climate change and the damage that human beings were doing to God's creation, he not only preached a series of sermons introducing Creation Care as a Christian obligation, he also asked his church board to integrate sustainability into governance policies. The request to the

board, like the sermon series, included the pastor's testimony about the process of Bible study and prayer that had brought him to the conviction that Christians must take action in order to care for creation. Some members of the board, who were politically conservative and employed in extractive resource industries, were hesitant. They took time to pray and reflect over several days before eventually deciding that they agreed with their pastor and would, indeed, integrate environmental concerns into organizational management policies. This process of biblical justification followed by prayer and reflection is consistent with decision processes in an evangelical church. By following this paradigm, both the pastor's request and the board's acquiescence gained legitimacy. The positive outcome illustrates how clergy could combine religious and managerial authority to promote community adoption of sustainability as a new social norm.

This combination of religious and organizational authority marks another place where the domains of Faith Leaders and Organization intersect. A faith community has specific organizational structures designed to aid in fulfillment of its organizational mission. Once governing boards adopted sustainability as a community emphasis, the senior managers (clergy and monastic leadership teams) could encourage people in other areas of an organization to support the environmental activities. At St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, the pastor assigned the parish Facilities Manager to serve on the Green Committee, thereby providing staff support for the lay-led effort to green the organization. At Temple Shalom, the rabbi interceded with the community's volunteer service organizations to encourage their participation in the temple's sustainability initiative. Rabbi Malinger and the board of trustees had decided that their congregation should seek GreenFaith certification, a process that requires support from clergy, staff, and lay committee members in order to implement activities in worship, education, social justice, and facilities management. The men's and women's service organizations did not initially perceive environmental stewardship as one of their responsibilities; they had their own traditional slates of activities and considered the new sustainability initiative to be the purview of the Green Team. As chief administrator of the temple, Rabbi Malinger was able to request their support by explaining that the certification project was a congregational goal and that the service organizations had obligations to contribute for the benefit of the entire community.

SUSTAINABILITY INTEGRATED INTO VALUES AND PRACTICES

Using these mechanisms, which were available through their roles as religious authorities and organizational managers, enabled faith leaders to weave sustainability into the religious life of their communities in three significant ways. First, through sermons, study groups, and newsletter articles that presented theological bases for characterizing earth care as a faith issue and connected it to the extant ministries of their communities, they defined earth care as part of their community values. Second, through affirmations that highlighted activities taking place in the community and rituals that brought earth care into worship services, they made sustainability a visible element of community religious practice. Third, the message that earth care was an expression of faith in action was reinforced when faith leaders exercised their role as organizational managers and helped implement initiatives by advising individuals about how to take action within the context of a religious organization and advocating for community support.

The emphases on values and practices worked together to foster a sustainability social norm. Environmental psychology research indicates that messages about the importance of specific actions, especially when presented by people like pastors, whose opinions carry weight with congregational members, affect individuals' attitudes and increase their interest in taking action (Ajzen 1988, 1991). That intention to act becomes much stronger if there is also a perception that the prescribed actions are in accord with normal behavior for people in the community (Cialdini et al. 1990). These theories suggest that affirmations and rituals were just as important for motivating community action as theology. By drawing people's attention to the practices of earth care taking place in their communities, faith leaders made those practices more visible and fostered a perception that environmental activities were normative behavior for community members.

Highlighting the community's environmental activities had an additional benefit: it made it easier for people to take action. One barrier that hinders adoption of new behaviors is a lack of knowledge about how to take action (Ajzen 1991). Faith community members who felt motivated to act but uncertain of *how* to engage in earth care could participate in accessible projects managed by their Green Teams. Faith leaders contributed to members' sense of competence to act both through the affirmations that reminded people of opportunities for action and through the advice that helped sustainability champions select courses of action that were well suited to the religious and organizational venues of their faith communities. Thus, faith

leaders integrated earth care into community social norms through both injunctions calling on people of faith to fulfill religious obligations and descriptions of practical actions with which to enact those obligations.

EARTH CARE'S EFFECTS ON FAITH LEADERS

Although most faith leaders preferred to discuss how sustainability initiatives affected their faith communities, adopting an earth care social norm also had an impact on some of the faith leaders themselves. In accord with the previous discussion of motivations that inspired faith leaders to address earth care, some commented that the initiatives helped them fulfill their roles as spiritual guides by helping individuals find ways to connect their dual interests in faith and environment, thereby keeping religion relevant to members' lives. As organizational managers with responsibility for the welfare of their communities, they appreciated opportunities to save money through resource conservation and to build a public image of their faith communities as places where religion was addressing current issues. Several pastors noted that adopting an emphasis on earth care had drawn new members to join the congregation or had coincided with revitalization of the community.

A few ministers also spoke of personal benefits that emerged as involvement with environmental activities enriched their ministry work. For Nancy Haverington, pastor of First Parish Church of Newbury when it adopted an earth stewardship mission, earth care became the means to revitalize a shrinking congregation by creating innovative worship services and cultivating a distinctive community identity. Similarly, Rev. Jeff Wild of the Madison Christian Community found that focusing on care for creation enriched his personal theology and led him to develop a new ministerial calling:

For myself, I think it helped me develop a more Trinitarian theology. Lutherans are especially Christocentric and our relationship with this place and this sense of place has led me to think about God as the Creator and have more of a sense of the Spirit. It broadens our sense of Christian perspective and identity. (2013)

Christian theology describes God as a Trinity, one divine being with three aspects of Creator (Father), Redeemer (Christ, Son), and Holy Spirit. God is understood to be the Creator of the universe who entered the world temporarily as Jesus Christ in order to bring salvation to human beings and remains eternally present in the physical world in the form of the Holy Spirit. As Wild's personal understanding of God expanded to include a greater awareness of the world as a

divine creation and of the Holy Spirit immanent in the natural world around him, he incorporated these new insights into his sermons.

In addition to theological insights, Wild found a special ministerial calling through his congregation's environmental activities. He realized that as the church members cared for their two acres of restored prairie and cultivated gardens to feed the hungry, they were building relationships with the physical space and the community of the church. These activities created a sense of place for members, a sense of belonging and attachment that strengthened the faith community. Recognizing this sense of place as a valuable component of religious life, Wild came to see his pastoral work as a "ministry of place":

To feel at home somewhere, to have roots in a place that nourish one's sense of selfhood; to be sustained by the beauty and fruitfulness of one's local landscape and the work and companionship of one's neighbors, can be experienced as holy gifts and occasions for gratitude and praise of God. (Wild and Bakken: 21)

Wild attributed much of the organizational stability of the Madison Christian Community to the environmental activities that fostered a sense of place among its members. At the time of this study, most North American churches were shrinking but the Madison Christian Community had a stable, multigenerational membership. Consequently, Rev. Wild felt a calling "to talk about a sense of place" and share insights about the benefits of place-based ministry with other pastors. To that end, he worked with theologian Peter Bakken to develop an adult education curriculum for congregations and together they wrote a book describing how to ground ministry in a sense of place. Thus, the experiences of a pastor who promoted an earth care social norm in his community were offered as a resource for other ministers seeking to build religious ministries that would be meaningful for modern Americans.

SUMMARY AND DOMAIN INTERACTIONS

How Faith Leaders Affected Initiatives

INTRODUCTION

Faith leaders made an essential contribution to the initiatives by legitimating sustainability as a faith issue, thereby making earth care an appropriate area of activity within the context of a faith community. Chapter 8 described the message frames that faith leaders used to define sustainability as a faith issue and, in particular, to explain why it fit into a community's sense of identity. Chapter 9 examined the mechanisms through which they presented those messages to the members of their faith communities. This section summarizes the findings of the two chapters and describes the domain interactions through which faith leader contributions affected development of sustainability initiatives.

FOSTERING A SUSTAINABILITY SOCIAL NORM

Faith Leaders legitimated sustainability as a faith issue and defined it as an appropriate area of activity for their communities through their dual roles as religious authorities and organization managers. Domain interactions contributed to the efficacy of faith leader actions: individuals and congregations were influenced by their advocacy for faith-based earth care and the organization provided the context in which they exercised their dual roles (see Table 9.2).

In the role of religious authority, faith leaders drew on theological teachings from their respective traditions to explain that earth care was incumbent on people of faith who wanted to live in accord with their religion's values. They also personalized earth care by linking it with specific ministries already practiced by their faith communities. In addition, they made the idea of earth care more accessible by suggesting that people of faith could make a special contribution to the great work of building a more environmentally sustainable society by evoking traditions of religious leadership in advocating for social change by promoting moral values.

9.2 Faith Leader Contributions to Initiatives and Their Interactions with Other Domains

Mechanisms for Legitimizing Sustainability as a Faith Issue	Effects on the Initiative	Interactions with other Domains
Religious Authority Religious messages (sermons, blogs, newsletters) connect earth care to: Theology Community identity Special role of faith communities	Legitimated sustainability as a faith issue requiring community action by connecting it with community values	<u>Individuals</u> : strengthened commitment <u>Congregation</u> : increased support <u>Organization</u> : opportunities to share religious messages
Religious Authority Public affirmations (announcements, celebrations, rituals)	Integrated earth care into religious practices	<u>Congregation</u> : increased support <u>Organization</u> : opportunities for adding earth care to practices
Organizational management Authorization, advice, advocacy within the community	Facilitated processes of taking action in a faith community	<u>Individuals</u> : increased efficacy <u>Congregation</u> : increased support <u>Organization</u> : venue for organizational management

In their role as organization managers, faith leaders were able to help integrate sustainability into the practices of their religious organizations. They had the authority to sanction formation of environmental task forces focused on specific projects and authorize discernment processes to explore adoption of earth care as a community mission. They could also advocate for support of sustainability initiatives with boards of directors and ministry committees. Finally, due to their comprehensive knowledge of religious organizations, they were able to advise individuals about how to take action within the context of a faith community.

These messages legitimating sustainability and promoting earth care action were shared through multiple mechanisms that combined to foster a sustainability social norm. Religious messages, presented through sermons, blogs, newsletters, and study groups, connected earth care to a faith community's values. Earth care was also integrated into religious practices through public affirmations such as announcements, celebrations, and rituals that drew attention to the actions taking place within the faith community. By raising the visibility of community earth care activities, faith leaders fostered perception that sustainability was part of the community's social norms, its behavioral practices, and not just an abstract theological principle. Furthermore, by reminding members of upcoming events, they provided information about how people could engage in earth care action. Thus, religious messages explained why earth care fit into a faith community's values and public affirmations helped integrate earth care into religious practices, thereby by encouraging members to participate in initiatives.

DOMAIN INTERACTIONS

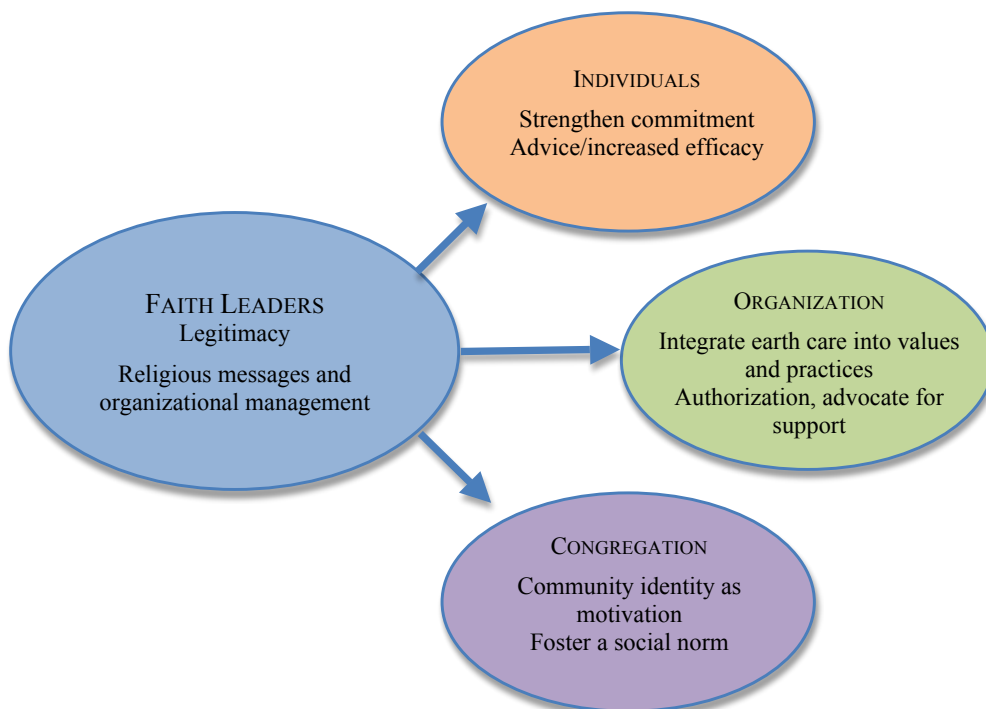
The mechanisms through which faith leaders promoted earth care as an area of activity for their faith communities contributed to development of initiatives through interactions with other domains. Individuals who participated in initiatives described the support of faith leaders as a key element in their success because it raised awareness and increased congregational involvement. However, implicit in their comments is a second vital effect: faith leader support affected the individuals themselves. Religious messages and public affirmations strengthened individuals' commitment to environmental efforts by validating their actions as expressions of religious life. This positive feedback created a sense of satisfaction both through external validation and the internal satisfaction of "living their values." When Lynn Cameron described the importance of her pastor's support and mentioned that, "She shows us off at mission meetings, tells people about the work we are doing," one can hear the gratification that comes from this validation of Trinity's Earth Care House Church. As noted in the Individuals chapter, religious messages from faith leaders also helped sustain champions so they could persevere in the face of challenges. For example, Rev. Ann Held's maxim that "God calls us to be faithful, not successful" not only motivated members of the House Church to tackle the complex problem of air pollution, it provided comfort when some projects did not go well. Malcolm Cameron noted that this message was "particularly important for issues where we've tried and failed." Interviewees at Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple made a similar comment about the importance of their rabbi's encouragement after they organized an interfaith Earth Day event that few members of their congregation attended. His reassurance that their efforts were valuable in spite of the low congregational involvement helped them continue their work.

The religious organization, as the context in which initiatives developed, provided opportunities for faith leaders to promote earth care by exercising their roles as religious authorities and organizational managers. As will be discussed in more detail in the Organization section, organizational structures contributed the worship services and newsletter venues through which faith leaders shared messages about earth care as a faith issue. Similarly, the governance structures of the religious organizations were the venues in which faith leaders authorized initiatives and advocated for support from boards and other committees. Finally, it was knowledge of the religious traditions and governance practices of their religious organizations

that enabled faith leaders to advise sustainability champions about appropriate options for taking action to address their desires to integrate earth care into their faith communities.

Faith leader support was particularly crucial for development of initiatives because it affected the levels of congregational support. They legitimated earth care as a faith issue that required action from their communities by grounding it in theology and connecting it with community identity by framing extant ministries and historical practices as precursors to environmental activities. They also made earth care accessible by suggesting people of faith could make a special contribution to the effort to build a more sustainable society through their role as voices of morality. Faith leaders used sermons and newsletters as mechanisms through which to convey messages about how earth care fit into the community's normative values, then encouraged members to act on those values by using affirmations and advice as mechanisms through which to integrate earth care into normative practices. By legitimating sustainability as a faith issue and connecting it with community values and practices, faith leaders encouraged their congregations to adopt earth care as a social norm. Congregational acceptance of an earth-care social norm increased member investment of time, talent, and funds in environmental activities, which were key factors in development and maintenance of initiatives. Figure 3 illustrates the interactions between Faith Leaders and the other three domains.

Figure 3 Interactions between Faith Leaders and the Other Domains



THE IMPORTANCE OF MESSAGE CADENCE

The efficacy of faith leader efforts to promote earth care in their congregations was affected by the frequency and consistency with which they employed the mechanisms for acting that were available to them. Message cadence differed across cases due to variations in the motivations that inspired faith leaders to promote sustainability, as well as the influence of current events and the liturgical cycles of specific religious traditions. These differing patterns influenced the development and durability of initiatives.

Faith leaders who were passionate about outdoor activities such as camping, gardening, and forestry found spiritual meanings in their engagement with the natural environment, which they then integrated into their pastoral work. Consequently, they returned to environmental themes regularly, year after year, in response to their recurrent personal experiences. Clergy used stories of their experiences with nature in sermons and blogs, while lay faith leaders incorporated nature into retreats and presentations in monastic communities. For example, Rev. Ann Held of Trinity Presbyterian Church, who enjoyed hiking and camping, frequently drew on these experiences to illustrate human responsibilities toward each other and toward the natural world. Judy Lepera, a member of Trinity's Earth Care House Church, commented on the consistency of Rev. Held's environmental messages: "Ann has been great about weaving earth care into the services. She does that too often to count."

Faith leaders who did not engage in regular outdoor activities tended to focus on environmental issues such as climate change or health threats from pollution that dovetailed with other personal interests in social justice and community wellbeing. In these cases, clergy were most likely to speak about sustainability when circumstances brought environmental issues to their attention. Major news events such as environmental catastrophes and international climate change negotiations inspired periodic homilies with environmental justice themes. Similarly, the need for a new building or the opportunity to achieve certification as a green congregation temporarily elevated environmental issues to a higher position on some pastors' ladder of personal concerns. Once the desired result had been achieved, whether completion of the building project or certification, sustainability seemed to drop to a lower level in the hierarchy of pastoral themes. This decreased emphasis was not necessarily conscious. When asked about whether he would continue to focus on environmental themes now that his congregation had completed its certification, one pastor indicated that he planned to address the topic every few

months, however analysis of the sermons he delivered that year showed sustainability was not mentioned.

Liturgical cycles could also trigger presentations with environmental themes because particular scriptural passages are closely associated with environmental ethics. Rosh Hashanah, the New Year's festival that is one of Judaism's major holy days, brings an annual assessment of ethical behavior and a retelling of the creation story, either of which may inspire reflection on the responsibility to care for the earth. Although it is a less important holiday, Tu B'Shevat, the spring festival associated with tree planting in Israel, often became an opportunity for a message about earth stewardship. The annual cycle of Torah readings could also trigger environmental sermons and blogs. For example, while reading the book of Deuteronomy, a verse on meat eating (12.20) inspired Rabbi Rosen to comment on dietary choices that affect the environment (Rosen 2013) while the *bal tashchit* passage prohibiting destruction of fruit trees (20.19-20) provided an opportunity for a treatise on environmental ethics (Rosen 2011b). Christians were less consistent in connecting sustainability with specific passages in the liturgy, perhaps because the topic does not fit as easily with New Testament readings as with Old Testament texts describing agricultural life in ancient Israel. Nevertheless, both Christians and Unitarian Universalists regularly focused on sustainability during worship services near Earth Day in April.

Variations in the cadence with which faith leaders iterated the importance of sustainability as a faith issue seemed to affect the scope and durability of initiatives: there is evidence that participation in environmental activities declined in communities that did not regularly hear environmentally themed sermons. For example, in three of the four green-certified communities, clergy messages dropped off and green committees disbanded soon after achieving certification. Without regular prompts from the pulpit, committees found it difficult to replace leaders or members who moved on to other projects. The fourth certified case, in which the Green Committee remained active despite decreased homiletic support, benefited from continuity of lay leadership and a large committee that provided the critical mass necessary to sustain their efforts.

As the differences in durability of the initiatives among the four green-certified cases illustrate, levels of congregational involvement also had significant effects on a faith community's earth care activities. The previous section exploring motivations that led faith leaders to promote earth care noted that there was a two-way relationship between faith leaders

and congregations. On the one hand, faith leaders' incentives to promote earth care were influenced by the level of interest within the congregation while, on the other hand, faith leaders who promoted earth care did so by explaining why it should be a topic of interest to their congregations. The next section focuses on the Congregation Domain and delves into factors that affected levels of support from the body of members in the case-study communities.

DOMAIN III

CONGREGATIONS

Arbiters of Initiative Capacity

INTRODUCTION

In 2011, the Madison Christian Community (MCC) realized that the future of a core program in their sustainability initiative was in jeopardy. During a community meeting, Pastor Jeff Wild, who had provided the impetus for numerous environmental activities and served as full-time coordinator of the community's extensive garden projects, announced that he could no longer maintain the same level of involvement in the garden and still fulfill his duties as a pastor. He was over-extended and "needed to decide if I was a gardener or a minister." The community had a choice: Wild could continue to be the primary organizer of the Children's Garden and do less ministerial work or the garden programs would have to be scaled back. After some discussion of whether it would be best to replace the Children's Garden with individual plots since there were few volunteers helping with the kids, the community decided that the children's program was important to their religious mission. Consequently, they hired a plant biologist to take over the garden coordination for the first year after Wild stepped down. The biologist systematized plant selection and established organizational systems that made it easier for volunteers to help out in small amounts, such as setting up a white board with a list of tasks on the edge of the garden so anyone with some spare time could stop in and lend a hand. Other volunteers took over management of specific garden areas: there were separate coordinators for the lower garden, the upper garden, and the children's program.

According to Sonja Keeseey-Berg, the community secretary, the momentary crisis marked an important turning point for the Madison Christian Community's sustainability initiative. When the community had to make a decision about the Children's Garden, it forced them to break out of the lull they had fallen into. Deciding to maintain all of the garden projects meant

that the members made a commitment, which led to an increase in the number of volunteers and an expansion of the program; the Children's Garden and the upper garden now produce even more fruits and vegetables for donation to a neighborhood food pantry. In essence, the community took ownership of programs that the pastor had begun and managed for nearly a decade.

This moment of truth at the Madison Christian Community reveals the importance of congregational support for developing and maintaining a sustainability initiative. Individual champions often began the environmental projects in the case-study communities, but the scale and durability of initiatives were affected by levels of support from the congregation, the body of people who make up a faith community. Prior to Pastor Wild's announcement, MCC members were proud of their community's environmental initiative, but many people took the activities for granted and relied on a small group of sustainability champions to make them happen. The 2011 meeting forced the congregation to make a conscious choice about whether they would support the initiative by investing resources of time, energy, and funds. At MCC, the congregation decided that creation care was an important part of their community mission and volunteers stepped up to share the workload.

Across the case-study communities, the level of support initiatives received from congregations affected their capacity by determining what human and material resources were available for implementation and maintenance of environmental activities. As the Madison Christian Community story demonstrates, two key factors affected levels of congregational support: 1) whether sustainability was perceived as an expression of a faith community's mission, and 2) to what extent the congregation participated in the decision to adopt earth care as an area of community activity. Both factors were aspects of the processes through which the initiatives developed and will be examined in the following chapters.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CASE-STUDY CONGREGATIONS

Before delving into these developmental processes, it is important to note some characteristics of the case study congregations that affected their engagement with earth care (see Table 10.1). The ten non-monastic congregations (1-10) were predominantly white and middle-class. Recent research has demonstrated that race and class do not necessarily correlate with variations in levels of environmental concern (Greenburg 2005) or support for policies to reduce

greenhouse gas emissions (Leiserowitz and Akerlof, 2010), however socio-economic status likely contributed to their financial capacity for implementing sustainability initiatives. This research project did not gather data on community members’ political leanings, a factor that is known to influence attitudes toward the environment. Jewish and Unitarian Universalist denominations tend to lean Democratic but white mainline Protestants and Catholics tend to be more evenly split so it is not possible to assume uniformity among members’ political preferences across the cases based on their religious affiliations.¹

Table 10.1 Faith Community Characteristics

	Faith Community	Denomination	Size	Locale
1	Trinity Presbyterian Church (TPC)	Presbyterian Church (USA)	165 members	suburb
2	Madison Christian Community (MCC)	ELCA and UCC	400 members	suburb
3	Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation (JRC)	Reconstructionist Jewish	500 families	city
4	First Parish Church of Newbury (FPN)	United Church of Christ	40 members	suburb
5	Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor (VAA)	Evangelical	600 members	suburb
6	St. Thomas Aquinas Parish	Catholic	1800 families	suburb
7	First Universalist Church of Rockland (UUR)	Unitarian Universalist	159 members	suburb
8	Trinity Presbyterian Church TNJ)	Presbyterian Church (USA)	350 members	suburb
9	Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple (AET)	Reform Jewish	550 families	city
10	Temple Shalom (TS)	Reform Jewish	300 families	suburb
11	St. John’s Abbey (SJA) Benedictine Men	Catholic	153 monks	rural
12	Congregation of St. Joseph, Nazareth (CJN) Sisters of St. Joseph	Catholic	191 sisters	suburb
13	Villa Maria (VM) Sisters of the Humility of Mary	Catholic	158 sisters	rural
14	Our Lady of Angels (OLA) Sisters of St. Francis Philadelphia	Catholic	450 sisters	suburb
15	Holy Wisdom Monastery (HWM) Benedictine Women of Madison	Ecumenical Benedictine	3 sisters 350 members	suburb

With the exceptions of Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Parish, the non-monastic faith communities were located in middle-class suburban or urban areas. The Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple building was constructed in 1930 in New Brunswick, an urban area that gradually shifted from middle to lower income. Although the members migrated to more affluent residential suburbs, in the 1970s the congregation voted to preserve their historic temple in its current location rather than build a new structure in a suburb. That

¹ According to a 2014 PEW research report, 48% of white mainline Protestants identify or lean Republican and 40% Democratic. White, non-Hispanic Catholics mirror these numbers with 50% Republican and 41% Democratic. In contrast, 65% of Jewish voters and 82% of black Protestants identify or lean Democratic. (PEW 2015)

decision was reaffirmed when the faith community elected to renovate and expand the Temple's building in 2006. St. Thomas Aquinas Parish had the greatest economic and ethnic diversity in its membership because five parishes were consolidated into one in the 1980s, resulting in a single religious organization serving several neighborhoods with different economic demographics. However, even at St. Thomas Aquinas, middle-class parishioners were prominent among committee leaders and volunteers carrying out the ministry work of the community. All ten cases had a mix of ages, but, like most faith communities in the United States, older members and families with young children made up the majority while young adults were the least well represented.

For the five monastic cases studies, the term "congregation" is here used to designate the body of members who make decisions about the activities of the community. This includes all members in residence at the monastery or convent but may also include members who live off campus in nearby housing or in small communities located in distant cities where the order has satellite organizations set up to implement ministries such as schools and health clinics. These non-resident members usually travel to the main campus to participate in formal processes for deciding future directions and leadership of their faith communities.

Among these monastic communities, changes in demographic characteristics affected congregational attitudes toward sustainability initiatives. Between 1970 and 2014, the number of women in Catholic religious life communities in the US declined dramatically from approximately 180,000 to about 50,000, a 72% change (CARA 2015). The number of priests and monks (male religious) has also declined, although at a slower rate of 35%. These national trends were mirrored in the membership of the five case sites where novices entering the communities have become rare. As the median age shifts toward retirement years, greater portions of community resources are allocated to senior residential facilities and healthcare. In response to these demographic changes, the communities are finding it necessary to think creatively about how to sustain the hospitals, schools, and social work ministries that they have founded as they approach a time in which there will not be enough nuns or monks to run them. Thus, for example, recognition that "there will be no new vowed women" caused the Sisters of the Humility of Mary to decide that they wanted to find ways to live in community with the wider society (O'Donnell 2013). Similarly, at Holy Wisdom Monastery, the sisters created a hybrid congregation that includes a non-monastic Sunday Assembly of people who come for worship

services as well as the four nuns who reside at the monastery. Consequently, decisions at Holy Wisdom are made by the sisters in consultation with a board that includes representatives of the non-monastic congregation.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Congregations determine what resources are available for activities undertaken in their communities by deciding whether they will provide funds, time and talent to support specific committees and projects. Therefore, congregational support was a significant factor affecting the scope and durability of the sustainability initiatives studied here because of its impact on material and human resources for implementing earth care activities. The next two chapters examine factors in the Congregation domain that influenced levels of congregational support, with particular attention to the following questions:

Chapter 10

- What factors contributed to congregational perception that sustainability fit with their community identity and mission?

Chapter 11

- What factors affected levels of congregational participation in development initiatives?
- What challenges affected levels of congregational support?

Summary and Domain Interactions

- How did congregational support affect sustainability initiatives?
- How did the Congregation Domain interact with the other three domains?

Chapter 10

CONGREGATIONS Community Identity and Congregational Support

So much of the sustainability ethic was already in place that it was just a matter for me to become aware of it and build on it.

Reverend Jeff Wild, Madison Christian Community

INTRODUCTION

Support from the congregations significantly affected the development and maintenance of sustainability initiatives in the case-study communities. Initiatives in communities with high levels of support had more participants, included a greater variety of activities, and were more durable. Moreover, high levels of congregational support facilitated establishment of earth care as a new social norm, a behavioral expectation for members. One of the factors that affected the level of congregational support was the extent to which congregation members perceived earth care as a community issue rather than the purview of a core group of environmentalists. Cross-case analysis indicates that this perception emerged as faith leaders and sustainability champions presented earth care as an activity that aligned with a community's identity and, therefore, fit into its mission. This chapter examines aspects of community history that came to be defined as precursors to earth care, thereby providing foundations for perceiving sustainability as an issue that fit into community identity. The following chapter will delve into community decision processes to better understand how the processes through which members reflected on these connections between earth care and community mission affected congregational support for sustainability initiatives.

CONNECTING EARTH CARE WITH COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Integrating sustainability into a community's sense of identity was a key step in the process of reaching the perception that earth care was an issue for the entire community. The

webpages on which faith communities describe “Who we are” indicate their identities are comprised of two essential elements: 1) the religious tradition, with its particular beliefs and rituals, and 2) the history of the faith community. The previous chapter described the role of faith leaders in addressing the first element by making connections between sustainability and a community’s religious tradition. In particular, it noted that faith leaders not only framed earth care as a faith issue due to its alignment with scriptural teachings, they also linked it with community identity by emphasizing that caring for the earth was related to the religious ministries through which the community put its faith into action. Thus, they connected earth care to a community’s religious values and practices.

Comparison of the cases indicates that the second element, community history, influenced whether congregation members were likely to embrace the idea of a connection between earth care and community identity. Each congregation has stories of its founding and historical traditions that set it apart from other houses of worship. In several of the case studies, practices from these histories came to be seen as precursors to earth care. Thus, in addition to the widespread focus on extant social justice and service ministries as foundations for an environmental ethic (described in Chapter 7), champions fostered congregational support by invoking prior environmental activities and historical land uses as means to demonstrate that earth care fit into a community’s identity (see Table 10.2).

Table 10.2 Foundations for Earth Care

Foundations for Earth Care	Non-monastic cases	Monastic cases	Total
Previous environmental activities	1	1	2
Historical land use	1	5	6
Social justice and service ministries	10	5	15

Building on Previous Environmental Activities

In two cases, congregational support was fairly easy to cultivate because previous environmental activities had laid the foundations for an environmental ethic. The Madison Christian Community had long engaged in land stewardship and outdoor activities although they had never been formally defined as “earth care” or sustainability projects. The Sisters of St. Joseph at Nazareth also had a history of environmental activities undertaken by one member that gradually came to be seen as evidence of a congregational environmental ethic. These pre-

existing traditions facilitated adoption of earth care as a new social norm for the congregations of the Madison Christian Community and Sisters of St. Joseph.

Pastor Wild said that the sustainability initiative at the Madison Christian Community took root and grew quickly because “so much of the sustainability ethic was already in place that it was just a matter for me to become aware of it and build on it” (Wild 2013). That pre-existing ethic developed out of the founding and past practices of this community comprised of two congregations. In Dave Keesey-Berg’s history of MCC, he describes how gratitude for the original gift of land, donated as they struggled to find resources to begin their ecumenical community,¹ made attention to the land part of the community’s spirituality. This foundational experience, in which their land seemed a miraculous gift, formed the basis for a “creation spirituality” embraced by members and pastors.

The community developed a number of practices through which they expressed their sense of connection between religion and nature, the most visible of which is the cultivation of restored prairie on part of their six-acre grounds. When the building was expanded, the earth displaced in the construction process was mounded along the front edge of the property in the shape of a bird with outstretched wings. The congregants saw the bird shape as a way to honor the native peoples who had once lived in the area and practiced lifestyles that were in harmony with the earth. MCC members planted the mounded earth with native prairie plants, a project that required them to gather seeds from remnant prairie patches along railroads and on “goat prairies,” hillsides too steep for cultivation. A few years later, a second prairie restoration project covered a gently sloping acre of land on the east side of the property. The two prairie areas are labeled with signs so those who visit or live nearby will understand that the non-lawn landscape is intentional and meaningful. The Madison Christian Community website describes the symbolism of this land stewardship:

[P]art of our mission to care for our earth, this prairie preserves a part of the natural diversity that thrived before European settlers came to this part of southern Wisconsin. It provides cover for small mammals, insects, and birds that are losing their habitat as the west side of Madison develops. Walking in this small prairie, we can experience the land as our ancestors did when they first saw this “sea of grass.”

¹ The Madison Christian Community is an ecumenical, or inclusive, community composed of the Advent Lutheran congregation (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and the Community of Hope congregation (United Church of Christ). It grew out of an ecumenical movement in the 1970s that focused on bringing people from diverse Christian traditions together.

Community members labor to maintain these restored prairies. During the growing season, volunteers come for a few hours each Saturday and, every few years, controlled burns help replicate the natural conditions vital to regeneration of prairie plants.

The community's environmental ethic was further developed by ministers who perceived nature as a place for religious experiences. Dan Schmiechen, the first Community of Hope pastor at MCC, established a tradition of taking high school youth on an annual trip to the Boundary Waters of Minnesota. Another pastor was fascinated by wildlife tracking and brought ideas from that skill into his homilies. With this background, environmental awareness was "very much a part of the spirituality of the community and out of it morphed concern for climate change" and other environmental issues (D. Keeseey-Berg).

These pre-existing environmental activities, which were unusual among the cases studied, help explain why the two congregations that make up the Madison Christian Community were so supportive of Pastor Wild's sustainability initiative. When the minister suggested putting in a wind turbine to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, his proposal struck a chord and, within months, a task force was exploring renewable energy options. Member participation on the task force and financial contributions to purchase solar panels are two indicators of congregational support but the aspect of the project that is especially noteworthy concerns behavior change. The task force examined energy use in the church buildings and created a list of recommendations for conserving energy, such as ensuring that the sanctuary lights were turned off before starting the dishwasher in the kitchen. These recommendations were immediately adopted and have become standard procedures for members of the church, an indication of strong member support for enacting earth care values.

Community history also facilitated development of the Children's Garden project. When Pastor Wild first proposed creation of the garden, he imagined it as a means for building a connection between the church and people beyond the congregation. His idea to create a garden did not, however, emerge from thin air; there was already a thriving neighborhood garden on the church property. This community garden had been established in 1973, when 21 families responded to a proposal to make plots available for church members. In the 1990s, as the area near the church developed into a residential neighborhood, open plots in this "lower garden" were periodically made available to non-members through the Community Action Coalition, a community action agency dedicated to reducing poverty (S. Keeseey-Berg, "Garden History").

Thus, since the lower garden had gradually evolved into a neighborhood garden where church members and the wider community interacted, there was precedent for using a garden to foster relationships among church members and between church and external community. This previous history meant that gardening was already part of the community identity at the Madison Christian Community, which made it more likely that the congregation would perceive support for the Children's Garden as a part of their community religious practice.

For the Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth, congregational support for adoption of formal sustainability initiatives also seems to have been enhanced by previous environmental activities that linked earth care with community identity. Sr. Ginny Jones helped organize the first Earth Day celebrations in the town of Kalamazoo in 1970, when she was a biology teacher at Nazareth College, and she established the Bow in the Clouds Nature Preserve on the convent campus in 1973. These projects became part of the historical record of the convent's contributions to the wider community. Participation in environmental education expanded to include more of the sisters in 1990, when the leadership team asked Jones to develop an environmental ministry. The resulting eco-spirituality programs introduced the sisters to theological teachings about the interconnectedness of all life on earth, which they incorporated into their mission to work "that all may be one" in God. Eco-spirituality retreats often included outdoor work in the Bow in the Clouds Preserve or on the grounds, which created hands-on experiences with earth care similar to those taking place in the prairie and gardens at the Madison Christian Community. These teachings and experiences influenced the congregation's decisions to require that the farmers who leased their land follow organic farming practices and to take some land out of production for restoration of wildlife habitat. The new land stewardship practices established earth care as a community value that paved the way for integrating sustainability into the religious organization through practices such as resource conservation and green energy purchases.

Re-framing Historical Land Uses

For the Madison Christian Community, previous environmental activities, especially land stewardship, served as an effective foundation for integrating sustainability into community identity. Similar patterns were evident in all five monastic cases, where congregational support for initiatives was strengthened by reframing historical land uses as evidence for a community heritage of sustainable land stewardship. The monastic communities developed narratives that

rooted their new environmental ethics in stories of their founding and past practices of forestry and agriculture.

When Fr. Paul Schwietz presented the idea for turning 2400 acres of land at Saint John's Abbey into an educational arboretum, he described the project as a way the monastic community could "strengthen the witness of our commitment to sustainability" (Kroll 2007). For the monk who would come to be known as the "Padre of the Pines," land stewardship was an expression of a sustainability ethic that was part of his community's identity:

Our stewardship is rooted in Gospel values and the vow of stability. Thus, designating our property as an arboretum springs from who we are as a monastic community. In a transitory and disposable culture, we witness/proclaim stability, longevity and sustainability. (Quoted in Kroll 2007)

Even though Schwietz saw the arboretum as a natural extension of abbey practices, he met resistance from his community because the monks were concerned about the changes that would come with it. Schwietz and his supporters embarked on an eleven-year campaign to build community support for the Abbey Arboretum, which was formally established in 1997. A key element of that campaign came from the combination of Benedictine heritage and abbey history. Schwietz and the abbot cited the 1500-year old Benedictine tradition of stability, in which monks remained in one place and often farmed their lands in order to be economically self-sufficient, as the basis for a heritage of land stewardship that had shaped Saint John's Abbey. The Bavarian monks who established the abbey in the Avon Hills of Minnesota in 1864 selected the location because it provided resources for a self-sufficient community: lumber for building the abbey and college and to supply a furniture woodshop; fuelwood for heat and making bricks; fields for crops; water power for milling grain; pasturage for livestock; and trees to produce maple syrup.

Over time, shifting community needs had led to changes in land use as unused farmland reverted to forest. By the mid-twentieth century, concrete replaced wood in building construction while fuelwood gave way to coal and, later, natural gas. In spite of the changes, Fr. Schwietz and those who supported his vision of creating an educational arboretum were able to cite the abbey's history of forestry and farming to argue that sustainable land management was part of their community heritage. The Arboretum website emphasizes this heritage theme:

The pioneer monks carefully managed the surrounding forests, fields, and lakes to provide shelter and food for the community while at the same time preserving these resources for our enjoyment today.

Arboretum advocates also stressed that the abbey had a long tradition of scientific woodland management. Some of the founding monks had relatives who worked as foresters in Germany and provided management advice to their brethren. In 1894, a tornado knocked down trees on abbey grounds and comrades in Germany sent seeds of Norway spruce, Scotch pine, and White pine, which became the earliest documented conifer plantation in Minnesota. The brothers later raised seedlings and planted conifers on former pastureland in the 1930s.² By 1949, the abbey had developed a forest management plan that followed Minnesota Department of National Resources recommendations for best practices in management of oak trees. That plan formalized a tradition of seeking out expert advice in order to manage the forest in accord with the latest knowledge, which provided a natural foundation for developing an educational arboretum that would demonstrate sustainable land management practices.

The tree-planting history rooted the monks to long-term care for the land. In spring of 2003, Brother Christian Breczinski, OSB, helped plant northern white cedars as a barrier between the Arboretum and Interstate 94. In an interview with a reporter, he noted that during tree planting events, older monks would tell him about the history of other trees at the abbey:

When he strolls through the woods with his older confreres, they often point to a towering white pine and tell him, “I planted that tree during my novitiate.” Last spring, Br. Christian performed the same ritual. “I can imagine how these cedars will look in 20 or 30 years, but I know I won’t live long enough to see them fully mature and that’s okay,” he reflects. “Someone else will see them and enjoy it. That gives me a sense of peace.” (Britz, 2003: 6)

In addition to forestry, many abbey monks engaged in outdoor work and hobbies that contributed to their sense that land stewardship was part of community identity. Activities that connected monks to the natural resources of the abbey include orcharding, woodcutting, beekeeping, maple syrup production, and birdwatching. Brother George Primus, who has worked as a bookbinder for the Liturgical Press and as abbey tailor, also served as the unofficial supervisor of the apple orchard and provided fruit for both monks and students. In addition, Primus enjoyed hiking, snowshoeing, and collecting Diamond Willow, which he used to make walking sticks and other crafts. Asked about his connections with the outdoors, he said, “I enjoy the peaceful surroundings; it’s relaxing. But most of all, I love watching things grow. It’s miraculous” (Quoted in Evenson 1999). Because he saw himself as “a woodsman at heart,” he

² Conifers are not native to the region; the pasture had originally been maple-basswood forest.

was pleased with the efforts to restore areas of oak savanna as a means to fulfill a religious obligation “to take care of what God gives us” (Evenson 1999).

Numerous current activities link monks to their community’s historical use of natural resources. Brother Lewis Grobe started a beehive in response to stories about colony collapse disorder, the condition that began decimating crop-pollinating bee populations at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Beekeeping had been a major activity at the abbey in the 1940s and 1950s, with over 100 hives producing honey and beeswax for candles. The resurgent interest in honey production derived from a combination of popular environmental concern about loss of bees and interest in recreating a piece of abbey history. Grape growing and produce gardening followed similar patterns. In the early 1900s, an abbey monk crossed a Minnesota wild grape with a concord grape to create the “Alpha Grape,” a hybrid that could survive Minnesota winters. The abbey preserved this heritage by maintaining a stand of the Alphas on a pergola in the monastery gardens but grape cultivation ended long ago. Then, in 2005, the Landscape Manager revived the tradition with ten new varieties of grapes, which are used for making wine, jelly, and juice (Garden webpage). There is also a revival of food production because the mainstream “farm to table” movement inspired several monks to take up gardening. The abbey’s ten-acre truck garden had been discontinued when rising labor costs and commercial competition made it uneconomical but the new gardeners are motivated by concerns about food quality and reducing reliance on an unsustainable commercial agricultural system rather than profit.

These diverse personal experiences of gardening and tree planting created a pool of monks who were sympathetic to the idea that resource stewardship was part of the abbey lifestyle. Their connections to the land, along with Schwietz’ invocation of stories about the abbey’s founding and history of resource management, contributed to the community’s growing perception of sustainability as a value that fit with their community heritage. Thus, community history and personal environmental activities helped build congregational support for adopting sustainability as a community ethic that is now part of the formal description of the abbey mission. The website for Saint John’s Abbey describes the community as a group of men who:

[S]eek God through a common life of prayer, study, and work, giving witness to Christ and the Gospel, in service to the church and the world. Called together by Christ, we support each other under the Rule of Saint Benedict and our abbot. Our life together encourages learning, creativity in the arts and trades, and care for God's creation.

The history of a religious organization's founding and members' experiences of working on the land were also important contributors to congregational support for the sustainability initiative at Villa Maria. When Sr. Barbara O'Donnell was trying to figure out how to act on her calling to educate for the earth, she began to research Villa Maria history. In the archives, she came across some loose pages that had been written by Father Begel, the priest who founded the Sisters of the Humility of Mary (HM) and accompanied the first members when they migrated from France and settled on land near Youngstown in 1864. During its early years, the community practiced subsistence farming while gradually building a school and medical clinic. Much to O'Donnell's delight, Begel described the original state of the lands and also recorded his plans for creating agricultural fields, planting an orchard, and establishing vineyards. Along the way, he described how to manage the forests, stating which trees had value for food, construction, or fuel, and how to use decayed organic matter (compost) and manure for fertilizer.

These notes became the basis for an organic gardening initiative. They provided evidence of a heritage that made it possible for O'Donnell to say to other women in her order, "See, it's not a whim. This project is true to our charism³ and history. As women of humility, we should have an interest in humus." The history of the convent also included development of a farming operation that provided income to the community from 1955 to 1983. At its height, it was the largest diversified farm in the area with 11,000 laying hens, 500 hogs, 75 head of beef cattle, 300 acres of grain, and 12 acres of orchards. During that period, one advantage the Villa had over other farms was a ready supply of labor from novices who were required to work there during their first year in the convent. The young women were assigned to gather eggs and pick beans. The farm was drastically scaled back in 1983, when industrialization of agriculture and declining numbers of novices made it difficult to compete for market shares. Moreover, malodorous farm operations were incompatible with the residential high school and retreat center that had been constructed to fulfill the sisters' new ministry interests.

Even though the farm operations ceased, most of the sisters in the HM order shared the experience of having worked on the farm during their novitiate, which gave them a personal connection to the agricultural heritage of the community. According to John Moreira, land manager at the time of this study, the Mother Superior once told him that she hated picking potatoes as a novice but she also considered that experience to be "part of who she is." These

³ A charism is the founding purpose of a religious order.

personal experiences with the Villa farm gave the women a sense of connection to the land of Villa Maria, the place where they trained for their vocations, spent time in periodic spiritual retreat during their careers in education and health care, and to which they would eventually retire to live out their final years in community.

O'Donnell built on this foundation of attachment to the Villa by educating her community about the founders' efforts to cultivate the land and the history of their land's management. In partnership with Frank Romeo, the long-time land manager who had been affiliated with the Villa since childhood, she organized community education activities. She and Romeo gave presentations about Villa history and described how care for the land connected with the order's spiritual traditions. Romeo led "boundary tours," in which a group would visit sections of the property by car and foot to learn about the diverse ecosystems of meadow, wetland, and forest that belonged to their community. Prior to O'Donnell's initiative, land management was a background activity, simply a staff function within administration of the Villa, and few of the sisters ventured beyond the residential campus and gardens. As they learned more about the history of their community and its lands, the women developed an active interest in protecting the property under their care. This new awareness of their heritage, combined with the personal experiences of farm work that connected them to the land, contributed to implicit congregational support for land stewardship, including both organic farming and sustainable forestry, as activities that fit their community identity. Eventually, that connection between heritage and land care became explicit as it was incorporated into a formal Land Ethic that defined sustainability as a community mission:

We, Sisters of the Humility of Mary, claim our history of being connected to the land of Villa Maria, Pennsylvania. Our Land Ethic is rooted in and flows from Scripture, HM heritage and charism, church documents, Catholic Social Teaching, and contemporary theology and spirituality. It affirms the prophetic call to ecological sustainability and nonviolence in all our relationships.

This Land Ethic serves as, "a guide for decisions made by the entire congregation and by those in congregational leadership regarding the land for which we are responsible."

Historical land management also provided foundations for adoption of sustainability ethics by the women of Holy Wisdom Monastery, Nazareth, and Our Lady of Angels, all three of which owned farmland that was eventually taken out of production as needs changed. In the early 1950s, a small group of Benedictine sisters established the monastery that would come to be known as Holy Wisdom on 138 acres of land in the hilly countryside north of Madison. The

land had previously been farmed and the sisters, who were running a high school/retreat center, continued to lease much of the land for agricultural use. Their land management followed best practices, a tradition that was later interpreted as a precursor to their current creation care mission. Neal Smith, the monastery's former financial adviser and long-time community participant, described the evolution of monastery management practices in a newsletter article explaining that the sisters had a long tradition of caring for the land:

Until the sisters owned the property, the land was farmed, and only a few trees existed on the initial parcel. The process of returning the land to a more pre-settlement existence soon began. It started with the gradual elimination of farming, developing a plan to attract native wildlife and planting trees and bushes. In the early 1970s, conservation practices began, including the contouring and planting of grass waterways in the areas still farmed. With the 1980s came the conversion of highly erodible hillsides to woodland and savanna areas, using the government Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). (2010)

Smith's account of historical land care emphasizes replacement of farming with ecosystem restoration, however the timeline indicates that the sisters were not opposed to farming during the first four decades of the monastery. Farming did not actually cease until after 1995, when the Benedictine Women decided to make earth care a central focus of their mission and developed a Master Plan for the grounds that included the decision to "eliminate the balance of the farming lands and restore all possible acres to native prairie and wetlands." (Smith 2010) As the sisters developed a new emphasis on creation care as part of their mission, the past history of land management, with its emphasis on soil conservation and application of sustainable agricultural practices, was reframed to emphasize a community heritage of land stewardship.

Like Villa Maria, the Sisters of St. Francis who founded Our Lady of Angels in the hills near Philadelphia in 1973, farmed part of their 298 acres to feed their community. In the 1950s, when an arsonist burned their barn, they decided not to rebuild because they had greater need for educational facilities to train nuns for their core work in academic, medical, and administrative fields. They constructed a college on former farmland and, over the years, the college expanded while the fields shrank. Although very few of the remaining nuns worked on the farm, that history contributed to community support for creation of Red Hill Farm, a community-supported agriculture venture on six acres of their land. Similarly, among the Sisters of St. Joseph, many of the women who retired to the motherhouse at Nazareth had fond memories of working in the orchards during their novitiate days. Sr. Ginny Jones also recalled that retreat participants had contributed a great many "woman hours" of labor to build the earthen berm on the edge of the

Bow in the Clouds Nature Preserve. Through these labors, the women became personally invested in care for their lands.

Thus, even in communities where participation in farming and forestry did not approach the scale of congregational activity at Saint John's Abbey and Villa Maria, members did have personal experiences of gardening and landscaping on community grounds that contributed to a desire to protect their lands. According to Prioress Mary David Walgenbach of Holy Wisdom, "Our sisters came here in the 1950s and bought the first 40 acres. Then they bought 90 acres more in the 1960s. They planted trees and did gardening and took good care of the land so periodically someone would want to buy part of it and they always said, 'no'" (Walgenbach).

Walgenbach's comment reveals an additional motive for congregational support of earth care: the desire to protect beloved lands from development. Her community took up the project to restore prairie on former farmland partly in response to awareness that new developments on lands bordering the monastery were causing runoff pollution into Lake Mendota. Sr. Corinne Wright, manager for the sustainability initiatives at Our Lady of Angels, also commented that development was a cause of widespread concern in her community.

People that pay attention see the demands on the land. For example, the township wanted to use some of our land to build a ball field and Neumann University [the college built on their former agricultural lands] wanted another field for soccer. We were trying to do earth ministry and ended up in conflict with all these people who wanted to put our property to use. We didn't want to develop the last few acres of forest; we wanted to protect the land and preserve it as habitat.

Some members of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia had already begun doing environmental education work, but the development pressures during the 1990s helped increase community interest in doing more to protect the environment. Consequently, in 1996, the leadership team assigned the environment as a topic to be addressed during the community discernment process and the congregation developed a formal environmental initiative as part of their mission. Wright stressed that the Franciscan community was willing to participate in civic projects that would not change the land, such as creation of walking trails, but felt it important to preserve habitat for the animals and birds that St. Francis had called brother and sister.

Linking Sustainability to Social Justice and Service Ministries

Previous environmental activities and historical land-use practices enhanced efforts to demonstrate that earth care fit into community identity, however, only six of the cases could

draw on such precursors to sustainability. The other cases had to look elsewhere within their community practices to find a context for fitting earth care into community identity and the most prevalent means of linking them was to connect earth care with ministry work through which a community fulfilled its religious mission. As Chapter 8 demonstrated, faith leaders made these connections by describing earth care as a form of social justice and community service. This message resonated in the case-study communities, all of which had long-standing traditions of service ministry. Among the non-monastic cases, the communities had justice or community service ministries that were usually managed by committees of volunteers from the congregation, while the monastic communities employed congregation members as staff to administer service ministries. Through these ministries, community members worked to provide food, housing, job training, education, and healthcare to low-income people in the US and developing countries. Linking earth care with the ministries through which these communities enacted their religious values was an effective means to demonstrate to congregation members that sustainability fit into their community identity.

INTEGRATING EARTH CARE INTO COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Chapter 8 examined the messages through which faith leaders defined earth care as an issue that fit into a community's religious identity and, therefore, required action from community members. Faith leaders legitimated sustainability as a religious issue by connecting it to their community's values and praxis; they drew on theological precepts to explain that people of faith had a moral responsibility to take action and pointed out that earth care was consistent with pre-existing ministries in social justice and community service. This chapter provided examples of cases in which previous activities that served as precursors to earth care contributed to congregation members' perception of whether earth care fit community identity (see Table 10.3) The influence of previous environmental activities and historical land uses were particularly evident among the cases where land stewardship became a significant area of environmental activity. Stories of founders who practiced pre-modern, sustainable farming and forestry provided a basis for claiming a heritage of land stewardship and adopting modern sustainable resource management practices. These community histories increased congregational support for earth care by encouraging members to see sustainability as a community practice rather than an activity for a small group of environmentalists. They also explain the popularity of

activities such as organic gardening, community supported agriculture, bee-keeping, and sustainable forestry, which replicated historical practices.

Table 10.3 Previous Activities that Contributed to Congregational Support

Factors	Benefits	Effects
Previous environmental activities	Able to build on a pre-existing environmental ethic	Extensive member participation Development of related activities
Past land uses	Connected earth care with community heritage	Foundation for land stewardship and resource management
Social justice ministries	Perception earth care fit into community mission	Extensive member participation Organization: Connect with other committees
Place attachment	Faith community as venue for earth care	Two-way relationship: place attachment inspired earth care and participation in earth care strengthened place attachment

In cases without overtly environmental past activities, champions and faith leaders associated earth care with extant ministries in social justice and community service. Since justice and service activities were more common than environmental activities among the cases studied, it is not surprising that messages linking earth care with social ministries were the most widely used means of connecting sustainability with community identity, especially among non-monastic communities. These messages resonated among members who actively supported or participated in justice and service work and helped increase congregational perception that earth care was a community activity, not just an environmental project for a core group. The case of Trinity Presbyterian Church in East Brunswick illustrates this process. The congregation had no previous environmental activities or land use heritage to provide a foundation for integrating earth care into their community identity, however study and reflection convinced them that none of their ministries in poverty alleviation or peace could be achieved without also addressing environmental issues. Consequently, there was widespread support from the congregation when they enrolled in the GreenFaith certification program. Once the community was certified, the Trinity Earth Shepherds started to scale back their initiative but congregation members protested and made it clear that they wanted them to continue. According to Debbie O’Halloran, “We went to the Session and said, ‘Okay, we’re certified. Should we keep going?’ They were appalled at the suggestion we might stop. *It is just part of who we are now*” (emphasis added).

Place Attachment

The emphasis on community identity as expressed through founding stories, histories and personal experiences of participation in ministry work reveals an additional factor that contributed to congregational support for implementing sustainability initiatives through the venue of their faith communities: a sense of place attachment. Attachment to place might seem most obvious for monks and nuns who live and work in their communities and engage in land stewardship activities; because they are caring for the places where they will spend their lives, they are motivated to protect their lands from development that would dramatically transform the character of the landscape. However, place attachment was also evident among volunteers who spent short periods of time helping with land stewardship activities at monasteries and among people who participated in various sustainability projects in non-monastic communities. It was a factor in the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation's decision to tear down and replace their building rather than move, even though selling it and using the proceeds to purchase another building would have been less expensive. And it helps to explain why the congregation of the First Parish Church of Newbury chose to stay and embark on a new mission of earth care even though they had shrunk to a tiny membership and faced enormous maintenance costs for their 19th century church.

Place attachment seems to have been a factor in the decision to take action and implement earth care efforts through the venue of a faith community because the members wanted their places of worship to express their community values. These communities of faith were also communities of place for which the house of worship and its setting were elements of community identity. Thus, communities with land holdings instituted sustainable land management activities that fit with their heritage as stewards of land resources, or started community gardens that fit with traditional ministries in poverty alleviation and food ministry, or installed solar panels on their buildings to reduce their carbon emissions and protect the poor from the effects of climate change. Those without resources for large infrastructure projects adopted conservation practices to reduce use of energy and water in their buildings and grounds and used space in their buildings to sponsor educational programs to teach about earth care. They also created visual displays about earth care for public spaces in their houses of worship. Through these activities, the places associated with the faith communities became venues for enacting the earth care ethic of the congregation.

Earth care both expressed place attachment and fostered place attachment. As a component of community identity, earth care motivated some members to engage in sustainability initiatives through their place of worship while, at the same time, participation in environmental activities increased place-attachment for many people. Volunteers who tended gardens, restored prairies, planted trees, weatherized buildings, and served as docents for green building tours felt a deep connection to the lands and buildings they cared for. Hands-on land stewardship cultivated a community identity so strongly rooted in the prairies and gardens of the Madison Christian Community, that interviewees spoke extensively about their outdoor earth care activities while rarely mentioning the energy conservation features of their lovely building unless asked about them. Similarly, members of the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation became deeply invested in their place during their green building project, with the result that the congregation now identifies itself as the People of the Green Synagogue. These communities-of-faith are also communities-of-place where attachment to place has been enhanced by the activities through which they engage in earth care.

Chapter 11

CONGREGATIONS Congregational Engagement in Initiatives

Countless devoted JRC members have worked tirelessly to prepare our new [green] synagogue building for this long-awaited day. Just as the ancient Israelites constructing the tabernacle in the wilderness, we have learned that it is not the building, but the process of building, that creates sacred community. (Emphasis in original)

Rabbi Brant Rosen, Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation

INTRODUCTION

Congregations determined the capacity of sustainability initiatives through their contributions of human and material resources for enacting earth care actions. Therefore, factors that affected a congregation's level of support for earth care shaped development of initiatives. The previous chapter described aspects of ministry work and community history that provided foundations for defining earth care as an activity that fit into community identity. Faith leaders and sustainability champions drew on these foundations to build support for earth care among the members of their congregations. Whether congregations accepted these ideas and put resources into earth care was influenced by congregational engagement in advancing sustainability as an area of activity. In most of the case-study communities, congregations actively participated in decision processes for adopting earth care as a community ethic and had a say in selecting the types of activities to be undertaken. There was, however, a subset of cases in which the congregations did not play an active role in development of initiatives and these differences in congregational involvement correlate with lower levels of congregational support for initiatives. This chapter explores factors that affected congregational engagement in advancing sustainability initiatives.

ENGAGEMENT OF CONGREGATIONS IN INITIATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Congregations became engaged in advancing sustainability activities in one of two ways: 1) a project related to individual or affinity-group concerns gradually expanded into an initiative that was embedded in community social norms or 2) the community adopted sustainability as a community ethic or value, and then developed an initiative to enact that ethic. Both of these “trajectories” led to implementation of environmental activities, however, within each trajectory, there were differences in the extent to which congregations participated in decisions about whether to adopt earth care as an area of community activity. Among the cases following Trajectory 1, five went through processes in which congregations were asked to formally endorse the activities of their Green Teams and adopt earth care as a focus for their communities while two cases had greening initiatives that were approved by pastors without input from the congregations. Within Trajectory 2, eight initiatives emerged from community discernment processes that included extensive congregational involvement whereas two were authorized through board decisions on behalf of their congregations. The variations in levels of congregational participation in decision processes correspond to differences in levels of congregational support for initiatives. See Table 11.1 for a summary of decision processes.

Table 11.1 Decision Processes for Adopting Earth Care

Trajectories	Decision Processes	Non-monastic cases	Monastic cases	Total
1. Began w/ a Small-group project	Congregational decision	3	1	4
	Pastor’s decision	2		2
2. Began w/ a Community decision	Congregational decision	3	4	7
	Board decision	2		2

TRAJECTORY 1. A GROUP PROJECT GREW INTO A COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

In seven cases, early projects addressing concerns such as protection of natural areas or responding to climate change were originally undertaken by individuals or affinity groups that wished to act on their concerns. Four of the congregations formally endorsed these activities as expressions of their community’s religious mission whereas they remained small group projects in the other two cases. The four that received congregational endorsement belonged to communities with established processes for community participation in decisions about community mission emphases. The other two cases belonged to denominations in which senior pastors had greater authority over decisions about community ministries, which meant that the

congregations did not play as much of a role in decision processes. See Table 11.2 for a list of cases.

Table 11.2 Trajectory 1 Decision Processes by Case

Process for Endorsing Earth Care	TPC	MCC	VAA	STA	UUR	SJA	Total
Congregation approved earth care	X	X			X	X	5
Pastor authorized earth care			X	X			2

Congregation Approved Earth Care as a Ministry Area

In four cases, earth care groups involved the wider communities in development of sustainability initiatives by asking the congregations to approve initiatives and contribute ideas for potential actions. At the First Universalist Church of Rockland, the Earth Team originally came together to participate in projects sponsored by the Maine Council of Churches. Eventually the team decided they wanted to scale up their efforts and proposed enrolling their church in the Green Sanctuary Program run by the Unitarian Universalist Association, their denominational organization. One of the first steps in this program is to seek congregational support, which the Earth Team did by presenting the idea during the annual community meeting. The congregation voted to approve the goal of achieving certification as a Green Sanctuary. Once enrolled in the program, the Earth Team (renamed the Green Sanctuary Committee) invited congregation members to a brainstorming meeting in which they asked about people’s environmental concerns with the goal of selecting projects that would be most relevant to the community. As Bauer explained:

We did an open meeting and about thirty people came. We asked them what their concerns were. We had people with different perspectives on what aspects were of most environmental concern but lots were worried about food. So we set out and did all manner of programs on local food.

In addition to programs on food preservation, this meeting led to a major project in which the church helped a young couple establish the first community-supported agricultural (CSA) venture in Maine, a project that flourished because of congregational support in the form of CSA subscriptions.

The congregational vote of support, which was mandated by the Green Sanctuary process, gave the community an opportunity to discuss whether earth care fit their mission and to formally adopt sustainability as a community ethic. The Earth Team added the community brainstorming session because they felt that including the congregation in the process of

selecting areas of action was important to their community values, which emphasized democratic processes and congregational ownership of church ministries. They also saw the inclusive process as a way to generate increased member participation in greening projects; people would be more likely to get involved in activities that addressed their interests.

The approval process through which the congregation at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg endorsed the proposal to undertake earth care differed slightly from the First Universalist Church because it involved the congregation in an annual discussion of earth care as a community mission. Houses churches are small groups formed by lay members who see a ministry need such as providing food and clothing to the poor; through these groups, members of Trinity fulfill their mission to “reach the world with a servant ministry.” The “calling” of a new house church requires that a group present a proposal to the congregation for its approval. The proposal is in the form of a covenant, a document that includes a formal mission statement describing the purpose of the house church and information about study and actions that will be undertaken to fulfill that purpose. If the congregation accepts the proposal, all members of the house church sign the covenant, which is witnessed by the Session (congregation) Communicator and Clerk. At the end of the year, the house church is reviewed to assess how well it met its goals and its members decide if they will apply to recall it for the next year. The review is presented to the congregation, which shares in the decision about whether that particular house church should continue its mission.

Through this covenanting process, the Trinity congregation formally affirmed that the Earth Care House Church was fulfilling a ministry need that was in keeping with the mission of Trinity Presbyterian Church. By endorsing the Earth Care House Church, the congregation committed itself to support its mission: “To promote Church and community awareness and involvement in restoring the creation” (EHC 2011). Because this process recurred each year, the congregation was regularly updated about the goals and activities that it was being asked to support, as well as the accomplishments to which its support had contributed. The strength of the Trinity congregation’s support for earth care is evident in the longevity of this environmental ministry: at the time of this study, the Earth Care House Church was the largest house church at

Trinity, averaging sixteen members¹ (one tenth of the congregation) and had been re-covenanted every year since its formation in 1996.

The sustainability initiative at the Madison Christian Community followed a different path than First Universalist and Trinity Presbyterian because it grew up around specific projects instead of formation of an Earth Care committee. Nevertheless, the three communities were similar in their adherence to processes that included the community in decisions along the way. The Madison Christian Community's sustainability initiative began with the pastor's idea that the church would be a great location for a wind turbine to produce clean energy and reduce the greenhouse gas emissions. At MCC, when an individual comes up with an idea, he/she checks to see if others share interest in it and, if so, they form a task force to research costs, benefits, and drawbacks and take it to the board. The board evaluates whether the idea fits with the community's missions and would be an appropriate use of resources. According to Tom Matthews, MCC maintenance person, this format for interactions between task forces and board allows members to actively participate in church governance while also placing some reality checks on enthusiastic small groups.

It's good to have this review because sometimes the task force is made up of advocates who really want something but don't represent the congregation as a whole. The board thinks about the costs and opportunity costs, which means considering what we will not be able to spend money on if we spend it on this instead. (Matthews: 2)

For any expense over \$10,000, the by-laws require that there be a meeting with a quorum of the congregation membership so the congregation can formally approve it. Matthews says that the community has spirited discussions but there is trust and respect among them and "nobody gets mad if the decision does not go their way."

Through this process, the community debated the merits of the solar panel project that the energy task force determined was more appropriate than a wind turbine. Consequently, when the project was approved, it had full support from the congregation. The solar project set a precedent for congregational backing of additional environmental activities such as the Children's Garden, food pantry garden, and rooftop rainwater collection system. Then, in 2014 when the church needed re-roofing, the congregation was asked to consider whether to reinstall the previous solar

¹ The size is larger than ideal for a house church. A large group means fewer opportunities for members to take turns at leadership and, because of an inclusive format, meetings are long. There are periodic discussions about whether to create two separate groups.

panels or increase the size of the array. They collectively decided to increase the array, which now covers the entire south-facing roof area.

The sustainability initiative at Saint John's Abbey also followed a trajectory in which an individual engaged in early environmental projects that became the basis for a community initiative that received widespread congregational support after the members engaged in a participatory decision process. The community played a particularly large role in the decision to adopt a sustainability initiative at Saint John's Abbey due to the scope of the project. When Fr. Paul Schwietz proposed turning 2400 acres of abbey lands into an arboretum, his vision was not widely supported. According to land manager Tom Kroll, "he had to sell the idea pretty hard" because the monks were concerned that designating the land as an educational arboretum, with programs to be run by Saint John's University, would give the university control over their land. Because the decision processes of the Abbey emphasized consensus among the monks, it was necessary to cultivate broad support within the monastery and its affiliated university community before the vision for an arboretum could become reality. Consensus is especially important in decisions about property and resources, which are owned communally by the entire monastic body, and all proposals that affect the abbey must be evaluated for their potential effects on the long-term well being of the monastic community.

After a decade of listening to Schwietz advocate for the arboretum through a campaign that invoked forestry traditions of the abbey's German monastic heritage and demonstrated the efficacy of ecosystem restoration by restoring a wetland and prairie, Abbot Timothy appointed a committee to explore the idea. In 1995, an Arboretum Task Force studied how an arboretum would fit with the abbey mission and the curriculum at Saint John's University and Preparatory School. The resulting task force report described potential benefits for both abbey and academic communities. It stated that an educational arboretum would fit with the mission of the abbey by fostering Theological and Spiritual Values such as: celebrating the beauty of creation, which reflects its divine maker; creating a sense of mystery and sacredness at the heart of an arboretum that is fundamental to the spirituality of Benedictines "who attach themselves to a particular place and who dedicate themselves to a program of stewardship which encompasses preservation, sustainability, and biodiversity;" and providing an environment for repose and contemplation. The report also noted that an arboretum would have Educational and Academic Values as a place where people could learn about the integrity of the web of life by providing a

natural laboratory for field research and examples of conservation in practice. Thus, the task force argued that an arboretum had value for their community's institutional mission as an "embodiment of what Saint John's perceives itself to be: a worshipping community rooted in a place, dedicated to the liberal education of its students, committed to service for the local and wider community." The report concluded that an arboretum would serve as a tangible expression of holding natural resources in trust for future generations, a project of leadership in the local community and partnership in the regional area, and a positive instrument of public relations as the abbey would become known in association with a project dedicated to the common good.

Due to these potential values, which embodied incentives aligned with the interests of monastic and academic stakeholders, the Arboretum Task Force recommended formation of an arboretum. In response, the Chapter (the full body of monastic community members) agreed that designating the lands as a natural arboretum would be beneficial and called for a committee to develop an acceptable administrative structure. Schwietz worked with several monks and lay supporters to develop plans for an organizational structure to manage an arboretum and presented a draft proposal to the abbey's Senior Council in March 1997. Council members expressed concerns about the need to more clearly define issues of ownership and authority between the abbey and the university. The plans were then revised into two documents: "Basic Principles for the Saint John's Arboretum" described allocations of specific obligations and rights to the University and the Abbey while "Organizational Context for the Saint John's Arboretum" described organizational structures. These texts were presented to the entire Chapter of monks for discussion in April 1997. Only after the Chapter approved the organizational structure did the Saint John's Arboretum become a reality.

Through the lengthy, deliberative process at Saint John's Abbey, the entire community participated in the decision to put their community resources into the arboretum initiative. The Chapter (whole community) authorized a representative committee to develop a proposal, which was revised in response to feedback from members of the Senior Council before being presented to Chapter for approval. Along the way, the brothers carefully weighed the benefits and costs of the project and assiduously addressed members' concerns in order to reach consensus. Consequently, by the time the Saint John's Arboretum was dedicated, it had extensive support from the community. Br. Kulas described the community's affirmation of the arboretum in the ceremony celebrating its establishment on May 9, 1997:

[T]he entire Saint John's community assembled at the oak savanna to designate and consecrate Abbey lands and waters as the Saint John's Arboretum. Words lauding the preciousness of the natural area were proclaimed. This property was claimed for the extended community of monks, faculty, SJU/CSB students, neighbors, friends, supporters, benefactors—one community in one sacred place. (Kulas 1997)

Pastor Authorized Earth Care as a Ministry Area

The cases above stand in contrast to two cases in which the congregations were not involved in decisions to develop sustainability initiatives: in both cases, earth-care efforts were hampered by low levels of congregational support. At the Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor, a lay member founded Green Vineyard in response to a series of sermons on creation care. Rev. Wilson authorized creation of the group and encouraged their efforts to implement conservation practices such as reducing paper waste and improving the building's energy efficiency. The pastor also asked the board to adopt creation care as an organizational policy that would be taken into consideration when making decisions about building maintenance and administrative practices. Neither of these processes involved the wider congregation, which likely contributed to the perception that Green Vineyard was an activity for a core group of people with environmental concerns rather than an area of activity for the whole community.

A similar lack of congregational participation marked development of the initiative at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish. There, the senior pastor acquiesced to a request from a few lay people who wanted to join the bishop's Catholic Greening Initiative. With his permission, the lay people formed a Green Committee by advertising in the parish bulletin and inviting known sympathizers to join. The committee shared their mission with the congregation through regular articles in the bulletin, hosting educational presentations, and sponsoring activities at the annual parish picnic. However, the congregation had no role in deciding whether the parish would join the bishops' initiative or what kind of activities should be undertaken in their community.

The lack of congregational participation in the decisions about whether to adopt earth care as an area of activity in these two communities reflects their administrative structures. In both evangelical and Catholic churches, senior pastors have greater administrative authority than in most Protestant and Reform Jewish organizations. Thus, the top-down decision processes in these two communities derive from an interplay between Congregation and Organization domains, which affected the development of their initiatives. Adopting initiatives in response to

a pastoral decision rather than a participatory process involving community members seems to be a factor that influenced levels of congregational engagement with the initiatives. Members of Green Vineyard and the Green Committee at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish expressed frustration that members of their communities did not participate in environmental activities and both had difficulty sustaining their initiatives due to lack of critical mass in their groups.

TRAJECTORY 2. A COMMUNITY ETHIC PRECEDED AN INITIATIVE

In the second trajectory toward integration of sustainability into the social norms of a religious organization, faith communities adopted formal statements defining earth care as a community mission prior to engaging in environmental activities. As in Trajectory 1, there were variations in whether the congregation participated in the process of developing a sustainability initiative. Seven initiatives emerged from discernment processes, which involved community-level decisions to incorporate earth care into the community mission. In contrast, the boards of directors made decisions with minimal congregational participation for two initiatives that were triggered by opportunities to enroll in green certification programs (see Table 11.3).

Table 11.3 Trajectory 2 Decision Processes by Case

Process	JRC	FPN	TNJ	AET	TS	VM	CJN	HWM	OLA	Total
Community-level decision	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	7
Board-level decision				X	X					2

Community-Level Decision Processes

Seven of the cases that adopted an environmental ethic prior to engaging in environmental activities did so through a discernment process, a period of reflection in which to consider future directions for their communities. Because discernment processes were undertaken in response to community needs, they often indicated that a community was at a transition point (see Table 11.4 for events that triggered discernment processes). Sometimes those needs were urgent, such as a declining membership that threatened the survival of the community (FPN, HWM) or addressing infrastructure issues (JRC). Sometimes the needs were part of the regular cycle of a faith community, which includes periodic review of congregational missions and decisions about how to adapt the work of the community to changes within the congregation and the society around it (TNJ, VM, CJN, OLA). Whether responding to a crisis or a regular schedule, case-study communities perceived their discernment processes as important

activities that would shape the future of the communities. Consequently, there was extensive congregational involvement in the processes and wide interest in the outcomes.

Table 11.4 Events that Triggered Discernment Processes by Case

Triggers	JRC	FPN	TNJ	VM	CJN	HWM	OLA	Total
Infrastructure issues	X							1
Declining membership		X				X		2
Mission discernment			X	X	X		X	4

Infrastructure Issues

Major infrastructure changes can provide an opportunity for environmental action that involves the entire congregation in decision processes. Because buildings account for approximately 40% of annual energy use in the United States, they offer a venue through which to significantly reduce environmental impacts, and because infrastructure changes are expensive, they require widespread congregational support. For the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation, the resolution to “build green” was only the first step in a community-based building process that involved the members in decisions about how to apply green construction practices to their new synagogue.

The building decision process at the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation began traditionally. The board created a building task force to assess their options for addressing the inadequacies of their old building, which was no longer big enough. The task force engaged the congregation in extensive discussions about the community’s needs and hired a consultant to assess the community’s fundraising capacity so they could explore options that balanced needs with financial constraints. After looking at the three options of renovation, moving to a new location, or tearing down the old building and replacing it, the community decided they wanted to create a new building on the old site. About that time, members of the environmental task force attended a presentation on green building and conceived the idea of asking the board to consider building a “green” synagogue. Green building practices include: recycling materials from buildings that are deconstructed, minimizing waste and using renewable materials in construction, and creating a structure that conserves energy and water in daily operations. The environmental task force took their idea to the president of the synagogue and she told them to write a resolution and present it to the board. They took their draft resolution to the rabbi, who became excited about the idea of following construction practices that “really reflected the

values that are important to us” and provided support by articulating connections between sustainability and Jewish teachings that encouraged the board to take the idea to the congregation.

The community began a multi-year campaign to raise funds for a new building and included information about green construction as an expression of community values in the fundraising materials. According to Rabbi Rosen, “That’s how it all started. The more we learned about it, the more committed we became—as Americans, as global citizens, as Jews—to this notion of sustainability” (Yearwood n.d.: 4). Along with the religious message, the task force provided practical information to help the community make an informed decision. Julie Dorfman, who served on the environmental task force, noted that, “it helped to explain to congregants that the building would cost just five percent more than a conventional structure and would save 40 percent in energy costs in five to ten years over a conventional building” (Yearwood: 4). The congregation agreed to solicit bids for a green building but, because the structure would be unconventional, the community leaders moved slowly and continued to include the wider community in decisions about what options to include in the building.

When we started the process (of planning the building) it was before environmentalism and green building were really on the radar. It felt a little fringy. There were conversations we needed to have and we needed to do it step by step. One of the things we learned from the policy discussions is to say, OK, this is too much too soon. You need to bring people along and you need to do it in a way that people are comfortable. Not like it’s being imposed on top of them but like they are being involved in the process and we are learning about it together. (Rosen, quoted in Yearwood)

Making this green building project acceptable meant that the board could not just hire a construction firm and sit back, the congregation had to be involved in the construction process. Community members served on a planning committee that participated in the construction planning process by learning about green building and discussing tradeoffs among various options in order to make the best use of their funds. Because this committee shared their decision processes with the wider congregation, many individual members became knowledgeable about green building techniques. According to the rabbi, by the end of the building construction,

[P]eople here could tell you about T5 florescent light bulbs and VOC carpet and fly ash cement (all sustainable components of buildings) and all kinds of things that we just had a crash course in learning about that we really didn’t know much about previously. In the process, it raised people’s consciousness. (Rosen, quoted in Yearwood)

As the contractor developed plans and outlined costs for specific features, the newly educated community was able to make decisions about what features to prioritize and which to cut in order to stay within budget. For example, they realized that solar hot water would have little conservation value in a situation where hot water was not used much during the week but was needed in large amounts on weekends. Instead, they conserved electricity by installing a highly efficient water heater and dishwasher, as well as motion sensors, windows, and efficient fluorescent lighting. They also decided that a white reflective roof was preferable to a green roof because the light color would reduce urban heating without adding weight to the roof whereas a green roof with soil and plants would require additional structural supports, which would mean adding columns that blocked sight lines in the sanctuary. These types of decisions were made after researching construction options and considering what features would provide the greatest value in the context of the synagogue's use patterns. The decisions were then shared with the congregation so the members understood the reasons behind the decisions.

Declining Membership

Two of the sustainability initiatives emerged from discernment processes undertaken at a time when the members needed to decide if their communities would continue to exist in their historical locations. In both of these cases, there was widespread community participation in the decision processes.

When First Parish Church of Newbury embarked on a year-long discernment process, the community was “dying physically, spiritually, and financially” (MACUCC 2011). Membership had dropped to about thirty people and the community was as worn down as its church building, which dated back to 1868. The minister, Rev. Nancy Haverington, initiated a community discernment process in which twenty-five people, almost the whole congregation, met weekly for a year to consider their future. According to the minister, for the first three months, they focused on self-analysis:

We conducted a strategic and prayerful look at who we were and what we were about. We took a good hard look at ourselves. We conducted a self-critique. We looked at what we did well, and what we did lousy. We kept putting things on the board. (Haverington, quoted in Rose 2008)

After this evaluation of their faith community's strengths and weaknesses, they began analyzing local community demographics and researching what other churches in the area were

doing so they could assess what they might offer that would distinguish them from other houses of worship. As they brainstormed, they also prayed and reflected together, and listened for the “still small voice”² of divine inspiration. In the Congregationalist tradition, each member of a congregation has an equal vote in decisions but the goal is to reach a consensus rather than practice majority rule because divisions are perceived as evidence that a community has not yet discerned the will of God. The denomination teaches that a community of believers should work together to discern God’s will through “habitual study of scripture, habits of worship and practices of prayer that involve opening the heart as well as listening for clarity” (Congregationalism, n.d.). Rev. Haverington described the way First Parish used this process to discern their new mission:

We started each meeting with a scripture reading, and then we went into silent prayer, asking God what God’s purpose was for us. Then someone stood up and stated that they had heard the answer. We were here to be an environmental church. We discussed it right then, and there was unanimous agreement. (Quoted in Rose, 2008)

The pastor noted that the idea struck a chord with the members because they already had environmental leanings. “Most of us had moved to the area because of the rivers and streams and the beauty of the environment” (quoted in Rose 2008). The idea was put to a vote and approved by the entire congregation; their community adopted a mission to be “Stewards of Earth and Spirit.”

The Benedictine Women of Madison went through a similar process involving research, discussion, prayer and listening. Inclusive decision processes are a tradition at Holy Wisdom Monastery, where Prioress Mary David Walgenbach asserts that, “We’ve always believed in consultation and letting others help us discern how to proceed.” In the 1990s, the two remaining sisters set out to determine whether to continue their monastery in Madison WI and invited people to join them in a visioning process. Participants included local people like their long-term financial advisor as well as academic and monastic religious thinkers from both Catholic and Protestant traditions who were invited to the monastery for a meeting in which they were asked to help the sisters envision options for their future. Seven options emerged from the

² God speaks to Elijah in a “still small voice” in 1 Kings 19:12 (KJV). Newer versions of the Bible translate the phrase as a “gentle whisper” (ESV). The passage is understood to mean that God’s voice can be heard in quiet reflection, not just in dramatic manifestations like great winds. <http://www.gotquestions.org/still-small-voice.html>

brainstorming session and, after prayer and discussion the sisters “chose the path that seemed best, with the affirmation of that group” (Walgenbach).

Having decided to remain in Madison, the sisters formed an ecumenical board of lay people to make administrative decisions for the monastery. This inclusive tradition has continued as the size of the community has grown to include two more sisters, a group of oblates³ who apply the Rule of Benedict to lay life, and a congregation called the Sunday Assembly. At the time of this study, members from the lay groups affiliated with the monastery regularly participated in decisions that would affect the “community of communities.” As Sister Lynne Smith explains,

In response to people seeking a spiritual community, we practice a shared leadership. We call on the skills of co-workers, oblates, volunteers, Sunday Assembly members, and friends. A sister is a member of the teams and committees in each of our ministries such as Sunday Assembly and the oblate community. Serving on committees facilitates communication of our mission and values throughout the communities, boards and work groups to which we relate. (L. Smith 2010)

Mission Discernment

Four faith communities adopted earth care as a mission after exploring the topic during discernment processes focused on updating their areas of ministry. These discernment processes engage congregation members in assessment of their faith community’s activities in relation to its mission, thereby making the community responsible for determining what kind of works it will undertake to express its religious values. At Trinity Presbyterian Church in East Brunswick, NJ, a volunteer committee examined three potential mission areas recommended by their denomination: hunger, peace-making, and environment. For three months, committee members engaged in a process of study and reflection to learn how these three issues affected human communities and how they related to the church’s overarching mission to “know, love, and serve God.” At the end of their study, they unanimously voted to recommend environmental stewardship as a new mission focus because they recognized that environmental problems underlay the other mission areas and, therefore, it would not be possible to eliminate hunger or achieve peace without addressing environmental issues. The committee then made a presentation

³ The Oblates of Holy Wisdom Monastery is an intentional community of women and men who incorporate spiritual practices into their daily lives without becoming nuns and monks. In partnership with the sisters’ community, oblates orient their lives to the Rule of Benedict and seek God through prayer, work, leisure, and study.

of their findings to the Session, the governing board comprised of the pastor, a clerk, a director of youth ministries and twelve elected elders (trinity-pc.org). The session approved the new mission, which was presented to the congregation.

Throughout this discernment process, the committee was understood to be working on behalf of the wider community. The committee was authorized by the congregation, and most of the Session members who approved adoption of the mission it recommended had been elected by the congregation to serve as their representatives. Later, the newly formed Trinity Earth Shepherds directly involved the wider community in their environmental initiative. When they decided that enrolling in the GreenFaith certification program would better enable them to fulfill their mission to help Trinity and its members grow in their ability to care for God's creation, they asked all the Commission chairs, who were responsible for leading other mission areas of the community, to support the sustainability initiative. Debbie O'Halloran, described the process though which the Trinity Earth Shepherds engaged the church committee network in their earth care efforts:

When we joined GreenFaith, we wanted to be sure we had across-the-board support from the congregation so we got all the Commission chairs to sign off on it. That was done consciously to make sure they would participate in the process. By getting them to sign off on enrolling in GreenFaith, we got their buy-in. And our pastor made certain that they knew they'd need to help, that this was not just a task for the Green Team. (O'Halloran)

Because the Commission chairs participated in the decision to approve enrollment in the GreenFaith program, they took responsibility for integrating environmental activities into their work. Thus, for example, the Deacons Commission decided to switch from disposable to washable dishes for Coffee Hour and the Finance Commission, which handled building maintenance, upgraded the lighting to reduce energy consumption.

For Villa Maria, Nazareth, and Our Lady of Angels, community members participated in evaluation of earth care as a potential area of activity through the periodic Chapter meetings in which the sisters update their ministries in response to changing circumstances.⁴ At Villa Maria, every four years, the Sisters of the Humility of Mary (HM) hold a Chapter to "reflect on our heritage in light of the times, to set direction and to elect a leadership team to facilitate the

⁴ Use of the term "Chapter" differs slightly among the monastic cases. At Saint John's Abbey, the Chapter is the entire community of members whereas in the women's convents, a Chapter is a community discernment process. The two uses overlap because both refer to gatherings of members who make decisions about the welfare of the community, however the women's Chapters may rely on committees of representative instead of a vote by the whole membership.

implementation of that direction” (HM Voice 30). In 1989, Care for Environment was identified as a direction for community action and, during the 1990s, groups of sisters participated in Chapter discussions exploring how to reframe the order’s vows in relation to cosmology. During study group and community meetings, individuals with environmental concerns shared theological texts that described the cosmos as a divine creation in which all beings are interdependent, thereby creating opportunities for the members to reflect on the spiritual calling of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary in relation to sustainability issues.⁵ This internal process of reflection on eco-theology and mission was further shaped by Sr. Barbara O’Donnell’s research into the community’s early land care, Frank Romeo’s presentations on the HM community’s farming heritage, and external news reports on global warming. In 1997, these reflections culminated in adoption of a new Direction Statement: “We will claim the depth and significance of our *charism* of humility which connects us with the whole earth community and unites us in our ministries on behalf of the poor.”

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth also adopted a community-wide earth care ethic during their Chapter meeting in 1989. During the meeting, the community evaluated how to update its directional statement in relation to its founding charism of “unity and reconciliation” as it pertained to the world’s current spiritual and environmental conditions. As a result, the members revised their directional statement to include concern for ecological systems as well as human beings, with the understanding that at that time in history, their charism was a “mandate for helping us and others restore a sense of balance and relationship with the whole earth community” (Jones 1996). Afterwards, the leadership team recruited Sr. Ginny Jones to lead the congregation’s efforts to implement their earth care ethic. She maintained a regular dialogue with the leadership and the congregation to inform them of opportunities for action and programs that were being developed. Through these inclusive processes, earth care received “overwhelming support and encouragement” from many members.

A similar process unfolded at Our Lady of Angels when the leadership team assigned the environment as a topic to be addressed during the 1996 Chapter. The community had already been involved in environmental education but that year they began a process of brainstorming about what else could be done to care for the earth. During the Chapter, the congregation

⁵ Readings came from authors such as Teilhard de Chardin (SJ), Thomas Berry (CP), and Sandra Schneiders (IHM).

participated in development of a community Environmental Vision Statement and Guiding Principles that stated:

We believe that Jesus Christ came as brother to all created reality, and as Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia we acknowledge our oneness with the universe. We call our selves to proclaim in a viable and tangible manner our belief in the Cosmic Christ.

Belief in the Cosmic Christ, present in every aspect of the created universe, meant that the sisters felt called to care for creation.

They then set up committees to research potential activities to answer that call. According to Sr. Corinne Wright:

We looked at all kinds of things that we might be able to do. For example, groups went to visit places to see what they were doing, like with hermitages constructed using green building techniques. That was how we started to develop the sixteen areas of the Environmental Initiative.

With the information gathered by these groups, the congregation worked together to select tangible action areas that would be viable given the resources of their community and, by the end of the Chapter process, they had approved an Environmental Initiative with specific Strategy Areas. They would: promote communication and support regarding their environmental vision with internal and external groups; expand on their past efforts to develop Franciscan-themed environmental education; address members' desires to protect convent land from development and restore wildlife habitat; promote Sustainable Lifestyles through activities such as organic food production, increased attention to sustainability of food consumed by the community, renewable energy, recycling and waster management; develop a formal land use policy and explore options for ensuring that future care of the land would continue to adhere to a Franciscan world view (Environmental Initiatives, 2000).

Board-Level Decision Processes

Two communities followed top-down processes that did not involve much congregational participation in the decision to embark on a sustainability initiative. At Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple and Temple Shalom, community leaders responded to denominational encouragement to enroll in an external certification program. In each case, a board member brought up the opportunity for participating in the program during a board meeting and the board, comprised of rabbis and elected lay leaders, decided to pursue certification. They then tapped known environmentalists within the community to serve as program coordinators. Mike Chodroff, the

environmental educator who led the program at Anshe Emeth, described the process for introducing his congregation to the GreenFaith program:

Twice a year, we have a congregation meeting. It's really a board meeting that is open to the whole congregation. In June 2010, we got grant approval for joining the GreenFaith program and I did a presentation on environment at the next congregation meeting. I started by reading a *Time* magazine article describing environmental damage and then asked people to guess what year it was written. They all thought it was recent but it was from 1989, the issue with the earth on the cover. I described the condition of some of the places mentioned in the article, like a lake that had gone dry. Then I described GreenFaith, the process and the goals. It was a way of introducing it to the congregation.

This presentation was designed to inform members of the congregation about the certification program and to ask for their support and participation. However, unlike most of the cases in this study, it was not a participatory process in which the congregation voted on the program after pondering whether it fit with their community mission. Nor were they asked to help select the activities that would be undertaken by their Green Team.

The low level of congregational participation in the decision to pursue certification may be one reason that there was less congregational involvement in environmental activities in these two cases. Both communities had wonderful educational programs, especially for children, and integrated conservation practices into their organizations to achieve significant reductions in energy consumption, water use, and waste generation. However, few congregation members other than the parents of children involved in greening projects attended events. Apparently, the congregations perceived sustainability as the purview of a small group of environmentalists rather than an area of activity for all members of their community and, once they became certified, there was not enough interest among the congregation members to sustain the level of engagement that they maintained during the two-year certification program.

Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple has continued to organize annual environmentally themed youth seders for Tu B'Shevat, the Jewish festival of trees, however the Green Team did not list any new activities on its webpage during 2013-14 and does not seem to be developing new projects at the time of this study. During this same period, environmental themes disappeared from Sabbath services because the junior rabbi, who had preached on the subject, left for another position. Similarly, at Temple Shalom, a few of the activities that were established during the GreenFaith certification program have continued: the solar panels on the roof deliver electricity, the rabbi leads a service at the beach during the summer, and the garden

coordinator raises food for donation to a food pantry as part of the community's social justice work. However, it is notable that when the temple developed a new website in 2014, sustainability became much less visible as an element of the community's public identity. Unlike the previous website, which had the GreenFaith certification logo on the Homepage, the new website does not include any indications that the community is green certified. Furthermore, there are no pictures of the solar panels or the garden, and no links to sermons or theological statements about Jewish environmental ethics. If sustainability had been perceived as an important element of Temple Shalom's community identity, members of the congregation would have ensured that their environmental accomplishments were more visible in this venue through which they present their community values and practices to the public.

CHALLENGES THAT AFFECTED CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT

Even in communities with extensive congregational participation in the decision to adopt earth care as an area of activity, initiatives did encounter challenges related to congregational support. The most common challenge interviewees mentioned was a lack of consistency in the congregation's interest in sustainability, which was often exacerbated by the aging of community members. A second challenge had to do with tensions that emerged when members realized that a community ethic might affect individual behavior.

Fluctuating Levels of Congregational Support

Despite participatory decision processes, congregational support for earth care action was not necessarily constant. Within most of the case-study communities, there were times when rising awareness of environmental crises, prompts from faith leaders, or discernment processes shifted the balance so that a larger proportion of members were interested in earth care. However, after adopting an environmental ethic, levels of interest would rise and fall as attention shifted to other topics such as dealing with an economic recession or supporting denominational campaigns on issues such as curbing human trafficking. At Our Lady of Angels, the community developed a policy to help address fluctuations in the popularity of an issue:

The level of community interest in a specific topic can change over time but, once we adopt an issue, those of us who are interested in it can continue to work on it. A facilitator clarified this point for us: 'Anything you have adopted but not voted out is still on the agenda.' (Wright)

This policy affirming the continued validity of a formally adopted mission area ensured that sustainability champions could continue to work on environmental activities under the auspices of the faith community.

Demographic shifts could, however, affect how many members were able to participate in earth care activities, with the result that congregational involvement in initiatives could decline. In four of the monastic communities, age reduced the number of members who participated in outdoor activities and Green Teams in some of the non-monastic communities mentioned that age was changing the types of activities they could do. In some cases, age motivated communities to find outsiders who would continue their work. Thus, the Sisters of St. Joseph donated their Bow in the Clouds Preserve to the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy when they realized they no longer had the womanpower to maintain the prairie fen themselves. This decision meant that the land they had cared for would continue to be preserved and used for the benefit of the public, in conformity with the values of the sisters, however it also meant that the congregation no longer spent time working in the fen or making decisions about it during their community meetings.

Sr. Corinne Wright identified a similar pattern at Our Lady of Angels, where she noted that physical limitations were changing the relationship between her community and its property. “It’s also getting harder to maintain the connection to the land. Only a few people can walk it any more; most seem to prefer to sit on their porches.” Even in the gardens near the residential buildings, “People make use of the grounds and go outside but not like they used to. There used to be circles of people sitting outside. But some have died and others maybe are just too busy.” With fewer community members outside, no one noticed that a new gardener had replaced the native vines on a pergola with wisteria or that mowing practices were encroaching on areas that had been restored to wildlife habitat. Thus, in several cases, the aging of community members affected congregational engagement in two ways. First it reduced the number of members who were physically participating in earth care activities and, second, it reduced the extent to which members were aware of what was happening with the implementation of activities in their community. As fewer members participate in or observe the initiatives, they may become less salient to the congregation and levels of interest may decrease.

Tensions between Community Ethics and Personal Behavior

As an abstract idea, adopting an environmental ethic seems simple, however, deciding how to implement that ethic within a community could create tensions when policies began to affect individual behavior. The Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation adopted a green ethic as a way to define the values that guided their decision to construct a green synagogue. After the building was completed, some community leaders began discussing policy changes that would integrate sustainability into other community activities and their proposals sparked a vigorous community discussion about how to implement their sustainability ethic. In an interview with Pauline Yearwood for *The Chicago Jewish News*, Rabbi Rosen described the challenges that arose when they tried to develop policies that would affect people's behavior:

When we developed our first green policy statement, I'll tell you frankly, some people freaked out. But our thinking was, if we're going to be the greenest congregation in the world, we should have a green policy that's commensurate with the commitment we made." (Yearwood n.d.: 12)

Undertaking a sustainability initiative in a faith community raises questions about expectations for behavior in members' daily lives. Religions have a long history of behavioral codes that affect marriage, occupation, food, clothing, and even hairstyles. In the United States, however, faith communities are voluntary associations and levels of insistence on adherence to doctrinal injunctions vary across denominations and even from one congregation to another within a denomination. Many Americans dislike the idea of having their individual actions "policed" to determine whether they are living up to religious ideals. Moreover, there is disagreement about which religious precepts are most important and how modern believers should interpret behavioral codes created in pre-modern societies. The voluminous rabbinic literary corpus, which records two millennia of analyses and debates over how to interpret behavioral codes, attests to the complexity of this issue.

At JRC, the community discussion of how their sustainability ethic should affect community behavior began with questions about policies that would mandate environmentally beneficial practices within the synagogue. Rabbi Rosen described some of the proposed ideas and members' responses:

Do we want our *bar* and *bat mitzvah* families to use caterers that will only use recyclables? Are we going to tell them they can't use Mylar balloons in celebrations? Are we going to extend this to fair trade—economic sustainability as well as environmental sustainability? People went, "Whoa, we're going to ask members to make that kind of commitment?" And the answer was, "Why shouldn't we?" (Yearwood n.d.: 12)

Defining best practices within a house of worship is, however, easier than deciding how much to promote integration of sustainability into daily lives. Since religions encourage members to live in accordance with their religious values, should there be expectations that people would undertake certain home efforts to live more sustainably? After all, religions have long histories of regulating food, drink, dress, marriage, and entertainment options for members so the idea of behavioral injunctions was not unfamiliar even if the guiding ethic was new.

“It’s one thing to live green in synagogue, then you get in your SUV and drive home. Are we going to extend our green philosophy to touch on other aspects of people’ lives?” [Rabbi Rosen] compares these issues to others faced by more traditional Jewish congregations—how far should they go in monitoring an individual’s level of *kashrut*,⁶ for example? Not all of these questions need to be answered, Rosen says, but he believes it’s important to ask them. “These are good questions and they are difficult because they go to the heart of our own personal freedoms, independence and liberties and also to being part of a community that’s based on values. This is the sacred value of environmentalism, and if we are going to commit to it in how we build our building, I believe we need to have serious discussions about how each and every one of us is going to carry it into our own lives as well,” he says. (Yearwood n.d.: 12)

Rabbi Rosen’s description of the conversations that arose at the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation illustrates a challenge that remained in the background for the other sustainability initiatives. It was easier to develop policies and practices for the religious organization than for the members. Few other congregations engaged in such explicit discussions of the issue, however, the topic was present across the cases, as evidenced in interviews during which people described activities to encourage more sustainable behavior in homes by selling CFLs and reusable shopping bags, organizing workshops on home weatherization, and developing campaigns to educate members about environmental issues related to consumption of products like beef or bottled water.

FACTORS THAT HELPED MITIGATE CHALLENGES

There were no simple solutions for the challenge of an aging membership, however some communities addressed fluctuating levels of interest and concerns that faith community policies might impinge on personal behavior by involving congregation members in decisions about adopting specific earth care actions. Brother Lewis Grobe noted that monks at Saint John’s

⁶ *Kashrut* is a term for the dietary laws prescribed in the Torah. They delineate foods that may and may not be eaten as well as rules for preparing foods. (JVL)

Abbey were not uniformly enthusiastic about sustainability, especially when it affected them personally: “there are 150 monks and they run the gamut in their interests and perceptions. Some are progressive and others think it’s a bunch of rubbish.” Changes at Saint John’s Abbey had to be deliberative and intentional so the community could reach consensus. Fortunately, according to Grobe, they could draw on traditional processes to evaluate proposed changes:

[E]ven in the abbey community, sustainability is not always easy. When we switched from paper to cloth napkins, that required three years of deliberation before we could make the move. People get into habits and it is difficult to change things. Sometimes you have to ask, where do you want to draw the line? What is appropriate to the monastic way of life? One good thing about the abbey is that here we are open to discussing these things so that, gradually, change can happen.

Participating in a well-established tradition of study and discussion assisted the abbey monks in making decisions about whether behaviors needed to be adapted to better conform with their community’s religious values and this process went on until the whole congregation was ready to adopt new practices. The monks’ system for cultivating consensus was similar to the process of study and discussion through which the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation fostered support for their green building project; in both examples, the congregation took an active role in evaluating potential actions before deciding what would be done. By sharing in decisions about actions, the members were involved in the process of implementing the sustainability initiatives undertaken by their faith communities.

Although participatory processes could help address tensions over behavioral codes, these challenges reinforce the importance of the role individuals played in promoting earth care. Individuals who joined green teams proposed behavior changes and led the discussions to persuade other members that the changes were worthwhile. Individuals implemented initiatives and persevered despite fluctuating levels of support from the wider congregation. Thus, individuals were a key factor in fostering congregational support and implementing initiatives despite challenges in stabilizing that support.

CONGREGATIONAL OWNERSHIP OF INITIATIVES

Cases in which congregations participated in decisions about adopting and enacting earth-care ethics had higher levels of congregational support during implementation of their initiatives. The congregational support associated with participatory decision processes seems to

derive from two factors: 1) a greater number of community members developed personal convictions about connections between faith and earth care and whether the initiatives fit with their faith community's identity and mission and, 2) individuals' uncertainties about courses of action and potential effects on the community, especially its finances, were addressed. Consequently, the congregation members had a sense of ownership for the initiatives, which were perceived as community projects that would benefit the entire faith community, rather than activities for a group of environmentalists.

In relation to the first point, participatory processes gave community members a chance to ponder whether sustainability was important to them as people of faith. In addition to hearing sermons on the topic, they became active learners who engaged in study, discussion, and prayer to understand how environmental issues intersected with their religious traditions. Like the committee at Trinity Presbyterian Church in East Brunswick, study led people to determine that unsustainable resource use affected their ministry work to care for the poor, promote social justice, and lead lives that reflected their spiritual values. Because a large portion of the congregation actively came to the conclusion that sustainability was a faith issue, the congregation was committed to supporting its sustainability initiative.

The second factor was also important for initiatives: people needed to learn about options for action and address concerns about whether environmental activities would negatively affect their communities before making a commitment. Often this exploratory process meant going slowly and giving people time to learn about environmental issues and potential responses. Thus, Fr. Schwietz spent eleven years promoting his vision of an educational arboretum and, in the meantime, he restored a wetland and a prairie area, which served as examples of sustainable land stewardship and made the arboretum idea less abstract. Similarly, members of the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation took their time in developing construction plans that were supported by their community. The building committee studied materials and took field trips to see samples of green building techniques so they could explain options to their community and make the best choices for the new synagogue. Across the cases, green teams organized numerous educational events with guest speakers to inform their congregations about climate change, energy efficiency, energy policy, food production, environmental justice, and green building. Examples of shared learning were prevalent in interviewees' descriptions of congregational involvement in development of initiatives, especially during processes in which the whole

congregation decided to adopt an earth care ethic or helped decide what kinds of actions should be taken to incorporate sustainability into the practices of their faith communities.

As a result of these two factors, widespread personal conviction and mitigation of concerns, members of congregations that engaged in participatory decision processes had a more unified perspective about the importance of sustainability as a faith issue and a sense of ownership for the decision to adopt sustainability as a community ethic. That ownership increased congregational support for initiatives and made it easier to implement environmental activities because members contributed resources and engaged in various actions to make their faith communities more sustainable. In the words of Sr. Corinne Wright, manager of the Environmental Initiative for the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, “It was important that it was all done by committees because then there is more buy-in. If it was just my little thing, it wouldn’t have happened.”

SUMMARY AND DOMAIN INTERACTIONS

How Congregations Affected Initiatives

INTRODUCTION

The levels of support from the case-study congregations determined each faith community's capacity for developing and maintaining a sustainability initiative. Chapters 10 and 11 described factors that affected these levels of congregational support. This section summarizes the findings from the two chapters, describes the effects that congregational support had on the sustainability initiatives, and explores interactions between congregations and the other three domains.

CONGREGATIONS AS ARBITERS OF INITIATIVE CAPACITY

When a congregation became invested in a sustainability initiative, its members provided support in the form of human and material resources that were available for developing plans and implementing activities. Domain interactions contributed to factors that affected levels of congregational support. Religious messages from faith leaders that defined past actions as precursors to earth care and integrated earth care into community identity motivated members of the congregation to support initiatives. That support was stronger in cases where the members were actively involved in the organizational procedures through which the community decided to adopt earth care as part of its mission. Many of the effects of this support intersected with other domains, which served as the loci for congregational engagement with initiatives. Congregational involvement influenced how many individuals joined a green team and what types of actions they undertook, whether faith leaders were motivated to promote earth care, and how many areas of the organization became venues for earth care activities. Widespread congregational support indicated that the members embraced the idea that earth care fit into their community identity and was part of their community mission. See Table 11.5 for an overview of factors that influenced levels of congregational support and how those factors interacted with other domains.

Table 11.5 Factors That Influenced Congregational Support and Their Interactions with Other Domains

Factors affecting support	Effects on the initiative	Interactions with other domains
Congregation authorized earth care initiative	Membership buy-in increased support for earth care	<u>Individuals</u> : moral support, affirmation
Engagement in decision processes	Community ownership of initiatives leads to support in the form of resources: Participants Knowledge Material resources	<u>Individuals</u> : critical mass on green team <u>Organization</u> : networks help integrate earth care into multiple activity areas <u>Faith Leaders</u> : incentive to promote earth care
Earth care linked with community identity (History and ministries)	Earth care became embedded in community mission	<u>Faith Leaders</u> : religious messages

HOW CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT AFFECTED GREEN TEAMS

In cases where the congregation participated in a community-wide decision process to authorize formation of a “green team” to pursue earth care as a ministry that would further the mission of their faith community, those teams were able to take action knowing that they had support from their congregations. On a personal level, this affirmation gave team members a sense that their work was appreciated. On a practical level, it meant that they could react to opportunities for actions that were within the purview of their mission without going through time-consuming approval processes. Interviewees at the Madison Christian Community described their congregation as having a “permission-giving” culture that allowed individuals to take action of their own volition once sustainability became an established area of activity. Thus, for example, lay members planted native plants in an entryway garden bed at the Madison Christian Community without seeking staff approval. Similarly, because the covenant for the Earth Care House Church listed public advocacy work as an action through which to fulfill their mission, members joined efforts to prevent hydraulic fracturing in the Harrisonburg area and testified in a city council meeting that their opposition was rooted in both science-based health concerns and religious beliefs without worrying about whether their congregation would feel that Trinity Presbyterian Church was being misrepresented.

HOW CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT AFFECTED RESOURCES

Congregational Support determined initiative capacity by affecting the human and material resources that were available for developing and implementing the initiative. High

levels of congregational support correlated with greater participation, which meant more people contributing “time, talent, and treasure.” Members who did not take action personally also contributed by providing financial and material support for specific earth care activities.

Participation

For both personal and practical reasons, one way that green teams measured the efficacy of their efforts was by the number of congregation members who participated in environmental activities. On a personal level, the number of participants attending environmental events was an indicator of congregational support that affirmed the value of their efforts. At Trinity Presbyterian Church of East Brunswick, the Trinity Earth Shepherds were delighted when between 70 and 80 people attended a lunch-and-learn session on environmental stewardship. Conversely, interviewees in a few cases were frustrated by low levels of participation in events they organized, which seemed to indicate a lack of congregational support for their efforts.

On a practical level, participation levels affected the number and extent of activities that could be undertaken. At Holy Wisdom Monastery, volunteers came to workdays to prune and harvest orchards, tend gardens, and restore prairies, thereby increasing the scope of the earth care initiative far beyond what could have been accomplished by the four sisters and their small staff. Support from congregation members who were active in various areas of a faith community intersected with the Organization domain and made it easier to integrate earth care into worship services, religious education programs, and facilities maintenance. Faith leaders in communities with high levels of congregational support for initiatives were motivated to preach more frequently about earth care as a religious issue, thereby reinforcing the links between community identity and sustainability. Religious Education instructors, organizational staff, and volunteers who helped with facilities or ministries could also participate in initiatives by incorporating earth care into practices in their areas of the faith community. These supplementary activities expanded the capacity of an initiative and helped embed it in the religious organization.

Knowledge

One of the resources that congregational support provided was knowledge. When the Madison Christian Community calls for volunteers to help burn their restored prairie in the spring, the members who turn out already have experience with prairie restoration work because

they are involved with similar activities in other places around Madison. In this city where Aldo Leopold began restoration experiments at the university arboretum in the 1930s, patches of prairie are ubiquitous; they can be found in public parks and on private lands. MCC was also able to hire members of its own community who had professional training in environmental theology and in religious education with an emphasis on science and religion in order to develop formal environmental stewardship curricula for both children and adults. In other cases, members used their knowledge to apply for grants, install solar panels, create organic gardens, and develop forest management plans. These knowledge resources made it possible to translate ideas into coherent programs, thereby fostering a community's ability to move from theology to action.

Material Resources

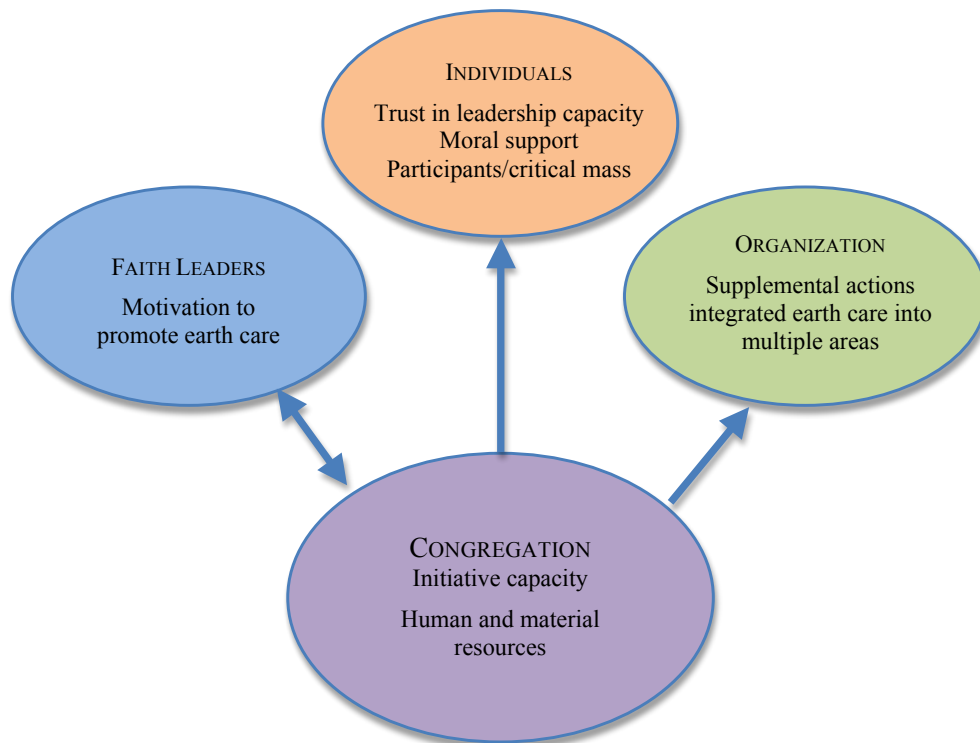
Access to material resources was another effect of congregational support for initiatives. At Villa Maria, one class of nuns, a group of sisters who had gone through their novitiate together, pooled funds to purchase cows for the Villa Farm and another class bought a tractor. Red Hill Farm, the community supported agriculture project at Our Lady of Angels, also benefited from a tractor purchased with convent funds rather than farm income. At First Parish Church of Newbury, the community renovated the church basement so it could serve as the venue for an environmentally themed preschool. The project was time-consuming and cost more than expected because it had to meet strict state codes, but the congregation persevered because they saw it as an important way to fulfill their mission as Stewards of Earth and Spirit. At the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation, a professional consultant estimated that the community would be able to raise \$3-4 million to replace their building but the members donated far more in order to reach a LEED platinum rating. According to Julie Dorfman, "The people who volunteered for fundraising were amazing. They raised \$6 million! The green vision was part of what helped raise that much money—people really stretched to support it." At the "green synagogue" and in the other case-study communities, financial backing was a significant indicator of congregational support for their sustainability initiatives.

DOMAIN INTERACTIONS

The role of the Congregation domain in the development of the sustainability initiatives was intertwined with other domains. As described in Chapters 10 and 11, levels of

congregational support were affected by faith leader messages about earth care as an aspect of community identity and congregational engagement in decision processes that adhered to a community’s organizational procedures. Moreover, the effects of congregational support played out through domain interactions. Congregations provided resources that affected the earth-care options individuals could carry out and their levels of participation determined whether green teams reached the critical mass that helped prevent champion burnout. Congregational interest in earth care also influenced whether faith leaders felt motivated to promote sustainability initiatives; where environmental concern was “bubbling up” in a community, leadership teams and clergy was more likely to authorize initiatives and preach sermons on earth care as a faith issue. Finally, religious organizations supplied venues through which members of the congregation who were not on the green team could take action and contribute to the process of integrating earth care into their faith community. Figure 4 illustrates the interactions between congregations and the other three domains.

Figure 4 Interactions between Congregations and the Other Domains



EARTH CARE EMBEDDED IN COMMUNITY MISSION

In case studies with strong congregational support for initiatives, earth care became embedded in community mission, thereby fulfilling the process of integration with community identity that began when champions and faith leaders framed community history and ministries as precursors to earth care. Although the data collected for this research project does not include surveys of whole congregations that would help determine how many members embraced the idea that earth care fit their community's religious mission, there are some indirect indicators of congregational attitudes in the way environmental initiatives were integrated into mission statements and in interviewees' discussions of financial considerations for implementing activities.

Earth Care Integrated into Mission Statements

Mission statements provide one indicator of a congregation's perception that earth care had become part of its community identity. During the process of developing sustainability initiatives, the case-study communities created formal earth care mission statements that were incorporated into their faith community missions in three different ways: as part of the overarching community mission, a subpart of a pre-existing ministry, or a green team mission (see Table 11.6).

Table 11.6 Locus of Earth Care Mission within Faith Community Mission

Locus of earth care mission	Non-monastic cases	Monastic cases	Total
Community mission	3	2	5
Integrated into a pre-existing ministry	4	3	7
Mission for the "green team"	3	0	3

Five communities integrated earth care into their community mission statements, thereby defining it as a key component of their community identity. Thus, for example, the Madison Christian Community described its mission as: "To live faithfully and lovingly with God, neighbors, and creation." Seven communities integrated earth care into pre-existing ministries: five defined it as an area of social justice work, one defined it as a form of service to society, and one defined it as part of its tradition of small group ministry. In all twelve of these cases, formal statements incorporating earth care into the overarching community mission or pre-existing ministries were prominent on websites and in promotional materials through which the congregations publically presented the characteristics of their communities.

In contrast, there was a final set of three cases that developed mission statements for their green teams but did not present earth care as an aspect of a specific ministry or the community mission. Websites for these communities listed specific environmental activities on their social justice ministry pages, but did not include formal mission statements or explanations of how earth care fit into the community's ministry work or religious mission. These were also the cases in which individuals and faith leaders described lack of congregational support as a challenge for their initiatives (see Chapters 7 and 8). Consequently, adoption of mission statements defining earth care as an activity that fits into community missions or ministries seems to be an indicator of congregational support for initiatives.

Support Transcended Financial Interests

Another indication that congregations embraced the idea of a connection between sustainability and mission was evident in some interviewees' insistence that values, rather than economic considerations, determined whether their communities undertook environmental actions. For example, developers periodically offered to buy the one-acre prairie next to the Madison Christian Community. In 2010, the community turned down an offer for \$300,000 because caring for the land had become part of their mission. According to church member Jill McLeod, they made the decision to keep the land because "God gave all of us this land, and he gave it to us for a reason. Not all religious lessons come out of a Bible; some of them come out of a garden" (Erickson 2010). John Moreira, land manager at Villa Maria, made a similar comment about the values that governed land use among the Sisters of the Humility of Mary:

The sisters look at sustainability as being just as important as making money [from their farm and forest lands]. It's not because they don't care about finances. They've built hospitals and schools; they know how to earn money and make economic calculations. But sustainability is a priority for them so they make decisions based on what is best for the health of the land and ecosystems, not just how to get the highest profit.

Some interviewees contradicted these comments and stressed that economic considerations *were* included in decisions. However, even those who insisted that costs could be a barrier to environmental efforts said that values motivated their communities to upgrade facilities and appliances, pay for services such as composting, and purchase more sustainable products as long as those options only imposed moderate budgetary increases.

Tom Matthews, whose job as maintenance person for the Madison Christian Community required him to consider the cost of materials as he implemented earth care projects, stated that,

“with us, it’s more of an ethical than an economic issue.” In this statement, he echoed his pastor, who felt that renewable energy was a valid investment for faith communities even if a congregation did not recover its financial costs because their calculations were based on religious teachings and concerns about the costs to the environment from using fossil fuels (Wild and Bakken 2009). Consequently, for a religious organization, renewable energy had value as a public witness to the wider local community, demonstrating that the members were living in accord with their faith’s principles. Because such an investment could only be made with extensive support from the congregation, the 64 solar panels covering the roof at the Madison Christian Community attest to the congregation’s investment in their mission to “live faithfully and lovingly with God, neighbors, and creation.”

By making the decision to adopt a community-wide earth care ethic and providing the resources to implement actions through the venue of their religious organizations, congregations contributed to the process of integrating earth care into the mission of their faith communities. The factors that influenced levels of support show the importance of the religious organization as a domain that affected development of the case-study initiatives. The organization determined what kinds of processes communities followed when they decided whether to adopt an earth care ethic and what kinds of venues were available for implementing earth care actions in a faith community. Therefore, the next section looks more closely at the contributions that religious organizations made to the development of these initiatives.

DOMAIN IV

ORGANIZATIONS

Venues for Initiative Implementation

INTRODUCTION

During a weekend retreat in the mountains, members of Trinity Presbyterian Church discovered they shared concerns about the environment and began discussing the possibility of forming a group to explore how earth care connected with their religion. Their church's "house church" system provided a venue through which this group was able to put their plan into effect. House churches are lay-led ministry groups that are formed to address a specific area of ministry activity such as providing clothing for low-income people. Each house church is supposed to consciously include four "marks": Mission, Worship, Nurture, and Fellowship. During the fall, members of a house church create a ministry mission statement and develop a formal covenant that describes the activities through which they will fulfill their mission in accord with the four marks. At the time of this study, the covenant of the Earth Care House Church defined its mission as: "To promote Church and community awareness and involvement in restoring creation."

That Mission was fulfilled through specific activities such as: staying informed on environmental issues and sharing information by writing letters to the editor and to political representatives; attending public meetings to speak up for preserving the environment; encouraging youth to go on outings; promoting resource conservation practices like recycling and water conservation; installing a bicycle rack at the church; and assisting another house church with food for the local Free Clinic. The Worship mark was fulfilled by including worship in house church meetings and leading an Earth Day Sunday service for the entire church. The covenant also included a study plan through which to address the Nurture mark by cultivating "deeper theological understanding of the creation and our role in restoring its wholeness." In

accord with these plans, Earth Care House Church members studied eco-theological texts and environmental writings. The fourth mark, Fellowship, was achieved through a meeting format that fostered attention to members' lives by celebrating birthdays and listening to each other's concerns. According to Judy Lepera, "At the beginning of our house church meetings, we share Joys and Concerns. Often someone says, 'I feel discouraged because this terrible thing is happening or has happened to our environment.'"

This house church system facilitated development of Trinity's earth care ministry by providing a procedure and format for organizing and managing an environmental affinity group. The structure of the four marks created a framework for formulating goals and corresponding actions, which facilitated implementation of ministry activities. In addition, a Discipleship Committee offered training for marks leaders to help individuals learn strategies for effectively leading the house church's practices of worship, nurture/study, mission activity, and fellowship. Meanwhile formal presentation of the covenant and the opportunity to lead a Sunday service provided procedures for interactions between the house church and the congregation that fostered congregational support for earth care as a faith issue. Thus, the organizational context of Trinity Presbyterian Church, with its house church system, shaped development of the sustainability initiative in two ways. First, it contributed operational procedures for establishing and managing an earth care affinity group and for regulating interactions between that group and the larger community. Second, its organizational structures provided opportunities to implement activities through venues such as worship services, community practices, and partnerships with other house churches.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

A religious organization is an institution with structures and procedures for running the organization and fulfilling its mission. The core components of a religious organization's structure fall into two categories: 1) administration and facilities management perform the functions of running the organization and maintaining the physical infrastructure, and 2) program management performs the tasks associated with providing religious programs and community services for the members. Organizational structures for managing administration and religious programs included governance systems to oversee the whole community as well as smaller units such as committees that manage a specific program.

All of the case study communities had governance structures to oversee their organizations. In non-monastic communities, the pastor/s and an elected board of trustees or directors had responsibility for management decisions. At Saint John's Abbey, the abbot managed the organization with advice from a council, while in the convents, elected leadership teams served as managers. These boards and leadership teams set the agenda but performing the work of a religious organization required numerous people in roles of pastors, education directors, music directors, childcare providers, office workers, custodians, maintenance people, land managers, and groundskeepers. Additional contributions came from members of various committees who helped with ministries such as planning worship services, caring for the sick and bereaved, and addressing social justice issues of poverty, food insecurity, immigration, human trafficking, etc. Large organizations like Saint John's Abbey and St. Thomas Aquinas Parish had employees to handle the administration of their religious programs and schools while smaller communities relied on volunteers to supplement a core staff that usually comprised a pastor, a religious education director, an administrative assistant, a maintenance person, and a music director. In many cases, some of these were part-time positions. The smallest case-study community, First Parish Church of Newbury, had a part-time pastor and a dedicated corps of volunteers who handled administration and maintenance of their historic church.

In order to coordinate management of administration and programming, religious organizations develop operational procedures that define standardized practices for running the organization and its various committees. Some of these procedures are formally defined in by-laws that describe the roles and responsibilities of boards and leadership teams while others are informal traditions passed on through personal experience as new committee leaders adopt management practices that were used by their predecessors. Operational practices also included processes for forming and managing affinity groups, and procedures that determined how those groups would interact with the wider community and its governing system. These operational procedures had significant effects on the creation of earth care initiatives, as noted in the previous section, which examined how the decision processes through which communities adopted earth care as part of their mission affected levels of support from the congregation. This section examines how operational procedures and organizational structures also affected the implementation of initiatives.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Although few cases had affinity group models that were as elaborate as the house church system at Trinity Presbyterian Church, all fifteen cases had operational procedures that shaped Green Teams and organizational structures that defined the venues through which sustainability initiatives were implemented. These procedures and structures provided opportunities and imposed constraints on the activities undertaken by the Green Teams. The following two chapters examine how the organizational context of the faith communities affected development of their sustainability initiatives with particular attention to the following questions:

Chapter 12

- How did organizational procedures affect development of initiatives?

Chapter 13

- How did organizational structures facilitate or constrain implementation of initiatives?

Summary and Domain Interactions

- How did the Organization Domain interact with the other three domains?

Chapter 12

ORGANIZATIONS Operational Procedures

In town, other churches have used us as a model for starting their own groups. They come to us and ask how we organize our environmental efforts. We tell them about the house church system, about the four parts and how we keep it as a faith-based group. The house church gives an organizational model that people can follow.

Lynn Cameron, Trinity Presbyterian Church

INTRODUCTION

The sustainability initiatives in this study emerged and were implemented in the context of religious organizations. An organization has procedures for creating and managing committees or small groups and for communications between committees and governing systems. This chapter examines organizational procedures that affected development of faith-community sustainability initiatives.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURES AND GREEN TEAM OPERATIONS

Few cases had organizational procedures for establishing and managing affinity groups that were as formally organized as Trinity's house church system, with its training to ensure marks leaders were able to fulfill their roles and its written covenant outlining an annual course of action for each house church. Nevertheless, across the cases, Green Teams followed a similar pattern of adopting procedures that were already familiar to their communities. These included two areas of protocols (see Table 12.1). First, there were procedures for internal operations of the committee, such as meeting management techniques and practices of group study, religious ritual, fellowship, and inclusive decision processes. Second, there were procedural norms that governed external interactions between committees and the wider congregation.

Table 12.1 Organizational Procedures that Affected Green Team Operations

Protocol Areas		Normative Practices
1. Internal group operations	Meeting management	Continuity: agenda, notes Project planning: timelines, designated roles Inclusive decision making
	Group study	Theology, ecology, religious environmentalism, field trips
	Religious rituals and Fellowship	Prayer, Chalice lighting Personal check-ins, Celebrate life milestones
	Decision making	Inclusive process
2. External group interaction	Interactions with the congregation	Presentation to the Community Newsletter articles

1. INTERNAL GROUP OPERATIONS

Across the cases, Green Teams followed similar organizational procedures for committee operations, which included meeting management protocols and practices of group study, religious ritual and fellowship cultivation, and inclusive decision making. Although some of these practices would be found in other types of organizations, there were elements of religious practice woven into the operational procedures for these Green Teams that were particular to religious organizations.

Meeting Management

Green Teams used meeting management protocols adopted from previously established traditions. For example, the chairperson from the Human Concerns Committee was invited to serve as the chair of the Green Committee at St. Thomas Aquinas parish during the inaugural year of the community’s earth care initiative. He instituted use of normative practices for meeting management that included: use of agendas and meeting minutes to organize information, designating a lead person to coordinate specific projects, and beginning meetings with a prayer. Adherence to similar foundational management practices was common across the cases and reflected the leadership skills of the individuals who championed these sustainability initiatives.

Adopting approaches that had previously been used for other types of affinity groups in their communities enabled Green Teams to operate effectively. At Trinity Presbyterian Church of East Brunswick, Debbie O’Halloran drew on practices used in Bible study classes for her leadership of the study group that examined whether to recommend earth care as a mission focus. In addition to investigating how environmental issues contributed to poverty, food insecurity, immigration, and violence, committee members were encouraged to engage in prayer and

reflection about how these issues intersected with their religious lives. Other communities had long traditions of using task forces to study and implement specific projects, which provided models for creation of environmental task forces that often evolved into Green Teams. Thus, for example, an Environmental Task Force that began with an emphasis on scriptural study and incorporating earth care into liturgy at the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation took the lead in promoting green practices for the new synagogue building. Similarly, a task force created to study the potential for installing a wind turbine at the Madison Christian Community evolved into a core group of members who implemented resource conservation practices and engaged in land stewardship.

Group Study

In addition to standard meeting management practices, organizational procedures for Green Teams in many cases included group study. Sometimes these studies were aimed at specific projects, such as analysis of potential for installation of a wind turbine, but most Green Teams also incorporated some long-term study of eco-theology or environmental writings into their annual activities. For Trinity's Earth Care House Church, study was mandated under the Nurture mark in order to build an understanding of the connections between religion and house church ministry work. The materials they studied indicate how the group's interests evolved over two decades of activity. They started with theological texts such as the Presbyterian Church publications, *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice* (1990) and *Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development* (1996) as well as more general works like *Theology for Earth Community* (Hessel 1996) and *Earth Community, Earth Ethics* (Rasmussen 1996). As the group members became increasingly interested in "doing something," they shifted their focus to texts that described ways to take action such as: *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* (Kingsolver 2007), *Serve God, Save the Planet: A Christian Call to Action* (Sleeth 2007), and *Natural Saints: How People of Faith are Working to Save God's Earth* (McDuff 2010).

Other Green Teams also engaged in study to explore connections between faith and earth care and to gain an understanding of environmental issues that would help them figure out how to take action. Thus, Green Vineyard engaged in Bible study to examine scriptural bases for creation care and members of the First Universalist Church of Rockland formed a Green Chalice

Circle in which to read and discuss environmental writings. At St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, Katia Reeves organized the Green Committee meetings around the St. Francis Pledge, which included instructions to “Learn about and educate others on the causes and moral dimensions of climate change” and to “Assess how each of us--as individuals or within our families, workplaces or other organizations—is contributing to climate change” (catholicclimatecovenant.org). For those who promote the St. Francis Pledge, learning and assessing are understood to be necessary precursors to action and advocacy. Similarly, men and women in monastic communities studied eco-theological teachings in study groups exploring whether to adopt earth care as a community ethic and on task forces working to develop sustainability initiatives.

Religious Rituals and Fellowship

Religious rituals and fellowship were regular components of group protocols that set faith-based organizational procedures apart from those of secular groups. Most Green Teams began their meetings with prayer. In its early days, prayers at the opening of the St. Thomas Aquinas Green Committee meetings varied from month to month, as different members took turns bringing in favorite prayers to share. Gradually, however, they adopted one standard prayer as part of their regular routine. As an alternative to prayer, the Green Sanctuary Committee at First Universalist Church of Rockland lit a chalice, the oil-filled vessel that is traditionally lit at the beginning of Unitarian Universalist worship services. Meetings also included fellowship practices such as personal “check-ins” in which members were invited to share joys and concerns that were affecting their lives. The Earth Care House Church celebrated birthdays and important events in members’ lives as a way to fulfill the fellowship mark and build relationships within the group.

Inclusive Decision Making

Across the cases, there was an emphasis on inclusive decision-making as part of Green Team operational practices. When interviewees were asked how they selected activities, they explained that all of the team members contributed ideas and the group supported each other in developing projects that addressed individual members’ interests. Judy Lepera, of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg, described the process by which one of the longest running Green Teams selected its activities each year:

We begin the year with a conversation about “What brought you to the Earth Care House Church?” The issues are all over the map: one person is concerned about water quality, another is interested in kids and nature, and for someone else it’s about mountaintop removal mining. What gets chosen depends on who joins [for that year]. Different people take the lead in developing projects that go in different directions instead of having one narrow focus. Somehow it works, maybe because we all feel like we’re part of a family.

According to Lepera, the Earth Care group sometimes worries that they will not be able to manage all the issues that get proposed but it is important to them, as a group, to address the concerns of each member so they do not turn down anyone’s request. Even in cases where activity selection was partially defined by green certification requirements, Green Teams made decisions based on the interests of their entire group. Mike Chodroff described the process for selecting sustainability activities at Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple:

We do it as a team. We talk about what we want to do. During the first year, we had all the requirements from GreenFaith. We had these amazing brainstorming sessions about how to fulfill the requirements. The ideas came from our interests and ideas from the congregation.

2. INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE GREEN TEAM AND THE COMMUNITY

In addition to organizational procedures that provided guidelines for managing Green Teams, initiative development was facilitated by faith community protocols for interactions between affinity groups and the wider faith community. These interactions took place through presentations to the community and through communication media, primarily newsletters.

Presentations to the Community

Trinity’s house church system offered a particularly effective model for fostering communication between small groups and the congregation. Every fall, the house churches were formally “called” during a service in which each group presented its covenant and described its mission and proposed actions. This process gave the congregation an opportunity to formally affirm its support for the house church ministry as an expression of the whole church’s mission. The following summer, house church members presented reports summarizing their activities from the past year. These reports allowed for celebration of accomplishments while also increasing congregational awareness of house church activities. Moreover, because the congregation was asked to evaluate whether the house church was fulfilling an important

ministry and should be recalled for another year, the annual summaries created a context in which the whole congregation actively endorsed earth care as a community mission.

Other faith communities had similar organizational processes for interacting with ministry groups. In many cases, committees proposed creation of Green Teams or submitted reports summarizing a team's accomplishments during a community's annual meeting. The First Universalist Church of Rockland sought community authorization to seek Green Sanctuary certification during such a meeting, which also raised awareness in the community and helped boost participation when the Green Sanctuary Committee subsequently organized a brainstorming meeting to ask the congregation to participate in decisions about the types of activities they should undertake. Likewise, the Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple Green Team used an annual meeting to inform the congregation that they were enrolling in the GreenFaith program and invited the wider community to share ideas for activities. Presentations during community meetings provided opportunities for people who did not have time to serve on the Green Team to make suggestions, thus leading to Chodroff's comment (above) that the ideas for their activities came from both the Green Team and the congregation. For cases in which organizational procedures did not allow Green Teams to make presentations to the whole community, there were alternative practices like that of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, in which the Green Committee submitted written reports summarizing the year's accomplishments to the community leadership.

Newsletters

Newsletters provided Green Teams with a simple procedure for communicating with their faith communities. In most of the cases, Green Teams composed regular monthly articles to share information about their sustainability initiatives. These articles described their earth care mission and its theological foundations, let people know about upcoming events they could attend, and provided tips for resource conservation behaviors that could be undertaken at home.

CONSTRAINTS: MISALIGNMENT OF PROCEDURES AND INITIATIVES

Organizational procedures created limitations where there was a misalignment between traditional practices and an emerging initiative. Consequently, some sustainability champions struggled to implement their plans. Sr. Ginny Jones faced challenges as she tried to develop an

appropriate format for the eco-spirituality programs that she inaugurated at Nazareth. Her goal was to balance theological teachings with meditative practices designed to foster experiential awareness of the divine in nature.

I also tried working to connect spirit with nature. If we really believe God connects to us through nature, we ought to be able to use nature as a spiritual path. I used the idea of Lectio Divina [a practice of reading and meditating on scripture to create a direct experience rather than an intellectual interpretation] and applied it to the study of nature. I had trouble getting taken seriously. Not many people are familiar with the practice of Lectio Divina and it requires solitary, silent time. Solitude and silence are not a part of our culture, even among the religious. People prefer a lecture. I would have 20 minutes for quiet. For those who were not familiar with it, that was too much and for those who were into it, it was too little. (Jones)

Jones found it difficult to create a program that fit the expectations of the diverse people who attended eco-spirituality programs at Nazareth. She sought to emphasize personal connections with nature through outdoor activities but many of the people coming to the programs were more interested in listening to inspirational teachings about nature than in spending time outside, especially in damp weather.

A poor fit between organizational procedural norms and the group format of a Green Team could also affect implementation of an earth care initiative. At the Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor, Green Vineyard adopted the format of small group ministry. In this context, small groups served as venues for Bible study in which people with shared interests, such as single mothers or gourmet cooks, gathered together to discuss scripture and engage in shared activities like cooking a meal or sewing a quilt. Unlike other small groups, Green Vineyard had a dual mission: to study the Bible in order to understand the scriptural basis for earth care and to undertake activities that would make the church more environmentally sustainable. The first part of this mission fit the traditional format for small group ministry, however the second part was out of sync with organizational norms because it included the expectation that people outside of the Green Vineyard group would participate in community-wide environmental activities. Green Vineyard members were distressed when church members did not join in projects such as outings to remove invasive species from nature preserves. However, one interviewee thought the problem had less to do with lack of interest than with a misperception caused by the church's small group norms. Gretchen Marshall-Toth Fejel suggested that "people didn't think they were supposed to take part in Green Vineyard activities because they didn't belong to the group" and,

normally, only members of a small group would be expected to participate in that group's projects.

The experience at Vineyard suggests that a misalignment between a faith community's organizational norms and the mission of its Green Team sometimes hindered implementation of an initiative. The small group model worked well to support individuals who wished to combine environmental interests with spiritual life but it posed limitations for the Green Vineyard mission of integrating creation care into the social norms of the wider Vineyard Church community. At the time of this study, Pastor Wilson was trying to revive Green Vineyard, which had faded away due to member attrition, and was consciously looking for a new model that would integrate earth care into the entire faith community.

[T]he small group model worked well. They met at Phil and Cassie Brabbs' house and they really supported each other in their interests. That's what the small group is supposed to do, be a supportive community.

The goal now is different. We want to have an overarching framework. That's why we liked the St. Francis Sustainability Model; it has a whole framework. The key to ministry is naming and claiming various projects, naming all the things we do, like the organic garden and recycling, as part of Green Vineyard. Then people get a sense that it is integrated into the church and into life. It's not about having a separate group of environmentalists as a subgroup. (Wilson 2013)

Rev. Wilson recognized the need to replace the constraining format of the small group with a framework that better fit the goal of integrating creation care into the social norms of the whole Vineyard Church community. Like the Trinity Earth Shepherds who enrolled in the GreenFaith program and the Earth Care group at First Universalist Church of Rockland who enrolled in the Green Sanctuary Program, that meant turning to resources outside the faith community that could provide useful programmatic structures.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURES THAT FACILITATED INITIATIVES

Organizational norms contributed to the process of implementing sustainability initiatives by providing procedures for establishing Green Teams, and for managing the team and its interactions with the congregation (see Table 12.2).

Table 12.2 Organizational Norms that Enabled Earth Care

Organizational norms	Effects on the initiative
Pre-existing models for affinity groups	Enabled establishment of a Green Team
Procedures for group operations Meeting management Project planning Rituals and fellowship practices Group study Inclusive decision processes	Facilitated implementation of earth care actions Sustained team members
Procedures for interaction with congregation	Fostered congregational support
Alignment of procedures with earth care	Facilitated efficacy of initiatives

These procedures made it easier for individuals to establish Green Teams that fit into the religious organization and were perceived as legitimate ministry committees by the wider community. Operational procedures included group management practices that enabled individuals to plan projects as well as inspirational practices that helped sustain individuals through faith and fellowship. Religious practices such as prayer distinguished operational procedures for a faith-based group from those in a secular organization and reinforced the conviction that earth care was a religious activity. Familiar affinity group formats and established operational procedures supported the efforts of Green Teams and helped integrate earth care into the practices of a faith community. The role of organizational norms in facilitating development of initiatives was especially apparent in a few cases where a misalignment between the format of the Green Team and the goals of the sustainability initiatives constrained efforts to implement earth care actions.

Chapter 13

ORGANIZATION Structures as Venues for Implementing Initiatives

[A] great aspect of what has happened here is that the temple administration has changed the purchasing practices. They'll only buy supplies that are compostable or biodegradable. As lights need to be replaced, they're being replaced with more efficient bulbs. And the cleaning supplies are green now.

Michael Chodroff, Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple

INTRODUCTION

A religious organization has structures for maintaining itself and for fulfilling its mission to cultivate members' religious lives. Maintaining an organization requires administrative systems for governance, staff management, accounting, communications, and membership records as well as maintenance of buildings and grounds. Fulfillment of religious missions requires staff, volunteers, and management of programs. The structures for running a religious organization served as the venues through which the case-study communities implemented their sustainability initiatives. This chapter examines how organizational structures affected development of the initiatives.

VENUES FOR IMPLEMENTING INITIATIVES

In addition to providing operational norms for green teams, the structures of the religious organizations provided action venues through which to implement initiatives. In the cases studied, action venues included: worship services, religious education programs, ministries, administration, and facilities management (building and grounds). The first three venues are program areas specific to faith communities; they serve the purpose of fulfilling the organization's religious mission. Administration and facilities, on the other hand, are components of most organizations. See Table 13.1 for a list of organizational structures that

provided venues for implementing earth care, thereby integrating it into the culture of the faith communities.

Table 13.1 Organizational Venues for Implementing Earth Care Activities

	Activity Venue	Types of Activities
1	Worship Services	Earth-care themed services Sermons Rituals (e.g. bless gardens)
2	Religious Education Programs (for children and adults)	Sunday school activities, Faith-based environmental education Study groups: scripture, theology, ecology Informational events (films, presentations)
3	Ministries	Environmental education: preschools, summer camps Gardening and food donations Social Justice Retreat Centers: programs and infrastructure
4	Administration	Purchasing policies and office management Recycled content supplies, non-toxic cleaning products, recycling, conservation behavior Kitchens/food: supplies and waste management Event planning (e.g. weddings, retreats)
5	Facilities (building and grounds)	Green infrastructure (building upgrades, renewable energy generation) Technology upgrades (appliances, lighting) Conservation behavior (energy, recycling, composting) Land management: stewardship practices

I. RELIGIOUS PROGRAM VENUES

The programs through which religious organizations met the spiritual needs of their faith communities offered venues for integrating earth care into community culture. Messages about earth care as a religious practice were integrated into worship services and religious education programs. Once members decided to develop a sustainability initiative, the community’s ministries, the services through which it expressed its religious values, became avenues for implementing earth care actions.

WORSHIP SERVICES

Worship, especially through community rituals, is a core activity for religious organizations and served as a key venue for integrating earth care into faith community culture. The previous section described a variety of mechanisms faith leaders used to share messages about the religious obligation to care for the earth. Worship services provided the context for

message mechanisms such as sermons, spring and fall prayers for fruitful gardens, and blessing rituals for events such as installation of solar panels. In nine of the ten non-monastic communities, clergy integrated earth care messages into regular services by addressing the topic in sermons. Some religious traditions allow lay members to lead services occasionally and, for Christian or Unitarian Universalist case-study communities with this option, green teams often took the lead in organizing an Earth Day Sunday service.

The liturgical calendar, with its yearly cycle of traditional holy days, also provided opportunities for integrating earth care into worship services. At the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation, the Environmental Task Force organized a Tu B'Shevat celebration, with some assistance from the rabbi.¹ Tu B'Shevat, which falls on a day in late January or early February,² is the date in the calendar that marks the “birthday” for trees. (jewfaq.org). Tracking tree age is important because there are biblical rules regarding the maturity of trees from which it is permissible to harvest fruit.

When you come to the land and you plant any tree, you shall treat its fruit as forbidden; for three years it will be forbidden and not eaten. In the fourth year, all of its fruit shall be sanctified to praise the L-RD³. In the fifth year, you may eat its fruit. (Lev. 19:23-25)

This minor holiday is often celebrated with a ritual meal (*seder*) that includes seven “fruits” that the Torah describes as being abundant in Israel: wheat, barley, grapes (vines), figs, pomegranates, olives and dates (or honey) (Deut. 8:8). In the early twentieth century, Israelis began a tradition of planting trees on this holiday and, later, Jewish environmentalists adopted it as a time for raising environmental awareness. It was because of this environmental tradition that the holiday served as an opportunity to integrate earth care into worship. The Environmental Task Force began organizing Tu B'Shevat Seders that brought people together to eat while learning about the Jewish relationship to the environment through activities for kids and educational presentations for adults.

¹ In the Jewish tradition, laity often help organize holiday celebrations, which are less formal than Sabbath services. Sabbath observance is performed in fulfillment of a biblical commandment (*Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it*. Exod. 20:8) whereas many holidays are post-biblical.

² Because Judaism uses a lunar-solar calendar with shorter months than the Gregorian calendar, dates for holidays shift from year to year. Tu B'Shevat is the 15th day of the month of Shevat.

³ There is a Jewish custom of not writing out names of the deity by omitting vowels.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Most of the faith communities had religious education programs for children and adults and these programs offered opportunities for introducing information about sustainability to the members. Communities incorporated earth care into curricula designed to teach children about the ethical codes of their religious traditions. They also organized educational events to share information with adults.

Earth Care Education for Children and Youth

Religious education programs for children and youth were prominent venues for addressing earth care missions in eight of the ten non-monastic cases. Teachers incorporated environmental ethics into curricula, often using materials that were available from denominational websites. At Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, Mike Chodroff, the environmental educator leading the community's GreenFaith certification process, began teaching an elective course on Jews and Ecology for 8th through 11th grade youth. He also worked with other members of the temple to incorporate earth care into the annual Mitzvah Day service project so that the donations children and parents packed and distributed to needy people in their New Jersey area were placed in reusable shopping bags. At Temple Shalom, Margo Wolfson's religious education classes for 3rd through 5th graders regularly discussed green teachings in the weekly Torah readings, which included numerous references to caring for lands and animals that were important for the agricultural lives of the ancient Israelites. Rabbi Malinger also developed an environmentally themed course for teens during Temple Shalom's participation in the GreenFaith program. At the First Universalist Church of Rockland, children learned about caring for the earth in their Sunday school classes, during which they helped paint a banner proclaiming, "We believe in caring for our planet earth," to be hung over the entryway to the building.

In addition to study of scriptures and wisdom teachings, youth engaged in environmentally themed activities as diverse as gardening, nature hikes, canoe trips to the boundary waters of Minnesota, field trips to local farms, service projects to clean up beaches, celebrating the birthday of Charles Darwin, and weatherizing a church building. The latter occurred at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg, where members of the Earth Care House Church led a Sunday school project focused on energy conservation. They showed the middle-school students how to use various types of weatherization materials, such as caulk and

weather stripping, and explained which materials were best suited to particular situations. They then turned the students loose on the older section of the church, which was a house that served as office and meeting space, and let them decide how to use the available materials to make the building more energy efficient. After the students finished weatherizing the building, they were asked what they would do with their new skills and several said they planned to repeat the activity at home. Even St. Thomas Aquinas parish, which did not have a formal earth care component to its Sunday school classes, had environmental education activities for children at its annual picnics. The Green Committee organized activities such as a recycling game, in which kids received prizes if they sorted materials into correct categories of “recyclable or waste,” and blind taste-testing of bottled versus tap water, to educate people about the advantages of tap water.

Despite the general agreement that it was important to incorporate earth care into children’s moral educations, one interviewee expressed concern that communities might perceive youth education as an adequate response to climate change, thereby absolving adults of the need to make significant changes in their personal behavior. She considered this “pediatric approach” to sustainability to be one of the greatest challenges for fostering real changes to the social norms of a faith community.

Earth Care Education for Adults

Adult education traditions also provided a venue for earth care action. Many of the faith communities organized regular educational programs for adults, often with a mix of formats such as textual studies, film series, and guest presentations. Textual studies might involve weekly or monthly meetings to explore a specific section of scripture or the writings of select theologians. Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple had a practice of Kollel or “Jewish Learning with Scholars, Rabbis, and Community Leaders” in the form of an annual adult education course that “brings together great teachers and topics that help challenge and push curious adult minds towards further growth and knowledge.” During the period in which the community was working toward GreenFaith certification, Mike Chodroff organized an environmental course for the Kollel.

Film series, which are popular for adult education, might include overtly religious films or secular productions on topics of interest. *Renewal* (2007) was a popular documentary to show because it describes eight stories of religious environmentalism focused on combating climate

change, campaigning against mountaintop removal mining, promoting food security, recycling, and reducing waste, advocating for environmental justice, and striving to preserve land, water, and trees. In 2011, some communities watched *Sun Come Up*, which depicted the moral implications of climate change, by showing refugees from the Carteret Islands trying to find a place where their people could relocate as sea levels rise. green teams also organized film series using a variety of secular films about climate change, renewable energy, and organic farming.

MINISTRIES

Religious organizations sponsor ministries through which they enact the moral teachings of their traditions. Some ministries, such as Bible study and retreats, focus on cultivation of personal spiritual insights. Others strive to address social needs by providing food, health care, and education to members and other people in the local community. Within the case-study communities, ministry traditions of education, food donations, retreat centers, and social justice became venues through which to implement sustainability initiatives.

Environmental Education Ministry

Several faith communities developed environmental education programs for children that were separate from their Sunday school programs and were open to the general public. Some of these programs were religious and others were secular but all were developed as forms of earth care ministry with the goal of educating young people about earth care through a combination of outdoor experiences and educational curricula. In these cases, the buildings and grounds of the religious organizations served as resources for integrating environmental education into the ministry work of the faith communities.

At Trinity Presbyterian Church in East Brunswick, the community provided classroom space for the Little Earth Shepherds Preschool Learning Center as a means of fulfilling its Environmental Mission Statement: “We, as a family of faith, believe that it is the responsibility of all to Care for God’s Creation through environmental education, conservation and community outreach.” The preschool program was designed to combine high-quality early education with an introduction to earth care in a Christian learning environment and, according to the church website, an important aspect of that curriculum would involve time outdoors:

[W]e will offer early childhood exposure to the concept of caring for creation and the world we live in. Children will have an opportunity to experience the beauty of the earth during outside activities in our on-site Vegetable Garden, as well as our Butterfly Garden – which has been designated as a Natural Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. (Trinity LES)

Like Trinity, First Parish Church of Newbury sponsored a preschool that was created in response to the community’s mission to be stewards of earth and spirit, however Our Secret Garden Indoor/Outdoor Nursery and Preschool was a secular program. It used the renovated basement of the church, where large fish tanks divided the room into separate activity areas, as well as an outdoor play space in back of the church. As the program name indicates, the preschool combined indoor and outdoor activities to fulfill its educational philosophy, as described on the church website:

Our Secret Garden Indoor/Outdoor Nursery and Preschool (OSG) is a nature-based center aimed at nurturing children of all abilities to care for themselves, each other, and the earth in a quality educational program that kindles children's natural sense of wonder and intellectual curiosity. Experiencing nature hands-on and then taking that experience into the classroom sparks learning at the highest level of each individual child's potential. OSG is committed to environmental stewardship believing that every child has incalculable worth and can make a positive difference in the community and in the world.

Renovating the basement and acquiring the necessary permits to begin the preschool were expensive and time-intensive projects, however the congregation members persevered because the project was perceived as an important contribution they could make to their municipal community.

Other cases also used their physical resources to provide space for environmental education programs that would expose children to nature. As described in previous chapters, Kids in the Garden was a summer program that brought children from a low-income neighborhood to the grounds of the Madison Christian Community, where they learned about growing fruits and vegetables and preparing healthy snacks. When the Sisters of the Humility of Mary began developing the Villa Maria Education and Spirituality Center, a couple of sisters and the farm manager created a Farm-Based Environmental Education ministry for children. One of their programs was a summer camp called GROW (Gardening, Responsibility, Once Weekly) that brought elementary school children from nearby urban areas out to the Villa Farm to “learn the value of the land through gardening, nature crafts, swimming, plant and animal care, hayrides and much more” (GROW brochure). At Trinity Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg, a member

of the Earth Care House Church acquired a grant that supported a summer program to take urban youth on outdoor fieldtrips during the summer.

Gardening and Food Donations

Food donation programs offered a conduit for sharing garden produce and several faith communities were inspired to develop gardening ministries as an addition to prior poverty alleviation ministries. Most religious organizations in the US contribute funds or supplies to food pantries and sponsor groups that take turns staffing soup kitchens so there is a strong precedent for food-related ministry work. Five of the case studies included creation of gardens for food pantry donations and a sixth started a project growing herbs for a near-by soup kitchen. At Villa Maria, where the sisters had provided aid to people in need since the 19th century, the land manager was instructed to continue growing potatoes for the poor even after the convent's commercial farm operation was discontinued in the 1980s. With this heritage, it was natural that, when Sr. Barbara O'Donnell and the land manager developed a new venture in organic gardening, a large portion of the produce would be donated to a local food pantry.

Partnerships with external food pantries facilitated garden produce ministries. The Green Team at Temple Shalom formed a partnership with a Methodist Church that had a food pantry. Members from the two congregations helped in each other's gardens and the produce from Temple Shalom's garden was donated to the Methodist Church for distribution. Madison Christian Community also sent produce from its Food Pantry Garden to a nearby food pantry for distribution. At the Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor, the Community Garden Ministry was begun in response to a presentation about a Faith and Food Program being organized through a county food pantry. Organizers of this program reached out to local faith communities, asking them to start community gardens and donate half of the resulting fresh, organic produce to the pantry. Participating houses of worship would receive assistance from experienced gardeners who could help them plan and set up their gardens and the food pantry would arrange to pick up the donated produce and handle distribution to needy people in the community. Such partnerships with food pantries made it easier for faith communities to grow fresh produce that would be beneficial to people in the community outside their congregation membership.

Social Justice

As discussed in the chapters on Faith Leaders and Congregations, many case-study faith communities defined earth care as an extension of their social justice ministry work. Thus, organic food donations and garden programs for low-income children, like the GROW camp at Villa Maria and the Kids in the Garden program at Madison Christian Community, were ways to build a more just society. Other pre-existing social justice ministries also provided opportunities for implementing an earth care ethic. The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia had a well-established ministry in Corporate Social Responsibility as part of their order's mission to "direct our corporate resources to the promotion of justice, peace, and reconciliation" (OLA CSR). They purchased stock in corporations and then attended stockholder meetings to encourage the companies to become more socially responsible by adopting policies to ensure that workers throughout their supply chains were treated well. After the community adopted an earth care ethic, the sister who led the Corporate Social Responsibility ministry added environmental justice to her stockholder advocacy efforts. For example, during stockholder meetings she submitted proposals to require that corporations provide information about the social and environmental impacts of their supply chains.

Retreat Centers: Infrastructure and Program Content

Retreat center ministries provided a venue for enacting an earth care ethic through both programming and infrastructure. At Villa Maria and Nazareth, sisters developed eco-spirituality programs in which people came to the convents to participate in retreats that included reflections on spiritual teachings and time spent outdoors on the grounds. Offering retreats in which people gather for spiritual development was already a well-established form of ministry work that fit with community social norms: all five monastic communities had traditional practices in which members regularly went on retreats as part of their monastic lifestyle. By the late twentieth century, the monastic communities had begun ministries in which they sponsored retreats for non-members and eco-spirituality programs were incorporated into those ministries. At Nazareth, the eco-spirituality ministry was combined with other retreat ministries to form the Transformations Spirituality Center, which offers organized retreats on a variety of topics throughout the year.

Development of eco-spirituality retreat ministries was facilitated by connections with other areas of community ministry work. At Villa Maria, Sr. Barbara O'Donnell created and directed an eco-spirituality ministry called EverGreen that combined information about nature with spiritual practices and reflections. O'Donnell attributed some of EverGreen's popularity to its successful association with other program areas within the religious organization:

It was the fastest growing ministry on campus partly because of the integrative programs. For example, we had connections to the health programs and music therapy and food. Tons of people came for the seasonal rituals. We had lots of programs on food and also on alternative energy. Oh, and journaling.

Health care was a ministry area dating back to the nineteenth century and many of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary (HM) living at Villa Maria had retired from careers in medical care or hospital administration so connecting earth care with health care resonated with community members. The sisters also had a long tradition of work in education. O'Donnell drew on her background in education when she and Frank Romeo, the land manager, created the Farm-Based Environmental Education ministry for children. As the environmental education and EverGreen ministries proved successful, the HM leadership team decided to merge them with the older Retreat Center and Education Center ministries. Together, the four programs became the Villa Maria Education and Spirituality Center (VMESC), with a centralized staff and coordinated vision:

VMESC is a sacred setting where God's grace is nurtured and abundant life unfolds. We seek to inspire lifelong learning and growth through relationships with God, others, self, and Earth.

The infrastructure for retreat centers offered another opportunity for implementing an earth care ethic. At Our Lady of Angels, the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia constructed small hermitages on platforms jutting out over the side of a hill above an undeveloped woodland in order to "tread lightly on the earth" by not disturbing the soil. At St. John's Abbey, a new guesthouse for retreat participants followed green building principles such as: including numerous windows for natural light; using wood harvested from the Abbey forests for ceilings, floors, wall panels, and furniture; and incorporating a rain garden with native plants into the landscaping where it serves as a settling pond for stormwater runoff. At Holy Wisdom Monastery, solar panels were installed on the roof of the renovated guesthouse and retreat center. All of these monastic communities added outdoor seating, often in native plant gardens, and

created nature trails so retreat participants could spend contemplative time outdoors. Thus, the buildings and grounds that housed retreat ministries became venues for practicing earth care. As an additional benefit, these environmental features were highlighted in promotional literature advertising the quality of the retreat facilities.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT VENUES

Administration and facilities management provided venues through which to make a faith community’s operational practices and physical systems more sustainable. Communities “greened” their religious organizations by integrating sustainability into their administrative practices for offices, custodial work, food service and event planning. In the area of facilities management, they made improvements to building infrastructure, appliances and lighting, and landscaping. They also conserved resources by changing practices for purchasing supplies, using energy, and managing waste as well as adopting new methods for tending the grounds. See Table 13.2 for a categorization of administrative and facilities operations through which faith communities implemented their earth care ethics.

Table 13.2 The Greening of Administration and Facilities

	Organizational Operations
Administration	Purchasing policies Office management Kitchens: dishes, food sources Waste management Event planning
Facilities management	Green infrastructure Technology upgrades Energy conservation practices Land management

ADMINISTRATION

Administration comprises all the day-to-day activities necessary to make a religious organization function. These activities include office work, budgets, organizing programs and events, and managing staff. Thus, an administration was a complex organizational structure where earth care could be integrated into the faith community through changes to policy and behavior. Areas of earth care action through administrative structures in the case studies included

purchasing policies, office management, food sources and food service materials in kitchens, waste management, and event planning.

Purchasing Policies and Office Management

At Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, staff developed new policies to incorporate sustainability into decisions about supply purchases and building maintenance. Mike Chodroff described the importance of administrative practices for greening the temple:

Another great aspect of what has happened here is that the temple administration has changed the purchasing practices. They'll only buy supplies that are compostable or biodegradable. As lights need to be replaced, they're being replaced with more efficient bulbs. And the cleaning supplies are green now.

Similar practices were adopted in all fifteen cases. Office and custodial staff began purchasing paper supplies with higher recycled content, as long as it did not exceed their budgets. They also reduced waste production through increased recycling, printing on both sides of paper, and switching to electronic communications. Communities that were already posting PDF versions of newsletters on their websites in order to improve communications made the online version the default version and reduced the number of copies they were printing. Thus, a practice that had begun for one reason (to make information more accessible) took on new meaning as the community sought ways to conserve resources and reduce waste generation. Anshe Emeth also revised its practice of mailing out paper copies of annual reports, replacing it with an email message containing a link to an on-line version of the report and a message letting members know that they could request a hard copy if they wanted one. This system reduced printing and mailing costs while also preventing paper from being wasted on copies for people who were not actually interested in reading the reports.

Kitchens and Waste Management

Kitchens were another venue for earth care through changes in purchasing policies and resource management. Communities purchased Fair Trade coffee and tea, encouraged use of local foods, and replaced Styrofoam coffee cups and paper plates with reuseable dishes. The move away from disposable dishes was usually accompanied by installation of a new dishwasher in the kitchen but at Trinity Presbyterian Church in East Brunswick, the community organized teams of volunteers to hand wash the dishes.

Some communities with kitchen facilities further reduced waste production by developing composting programs. Often these were simple programs, such as arranging for members to collect coffee grounds for their home gardens or placing kitchen scraps in compost bins for the community gardens at a house of worship. However, one of the monastic communities, Our Lady of Angels, had a more elaborate program. When the convent learned about a composting plant in Wilmington, Delaware, that would accept post-consumable waste, including food, they decided to create a comprehensive composting system. They designated a place in each office and living area for depositing paper and junk mail, which would be picked up by the housekeeping staff and taken to a bin for dry compostables. A separate bin was used for “wet” compostables like kitchen scraps and dining hall waste; it was centrally located so that sisters who did the cooking could bring stuff down to it. The maintenance staff loaded the bins on a truck and transported them to the composting facility. Sr. Ruth O’Conner described the measurable difference in waste production that resulted from these practices:

There are about 60 sisters living here and we feed lunch to 100 staff people every day. We also have the retreat center. So, there used to be *lots* of trash. Now the trash only goes out once a month while compost goes out about every fifteen days.

The program succeeded for two reasons. First, it was designed to fit the daily activities of the organization: staff who generated waste or managed waste were provided with training so they knew which materials could be composted and which had to go in the trash. Second, the members were willing to make the effort to support the program because they thought it was important to reduce waste going to landfills, even though it cost more to send materials to the composting facility than to the dump. Thus, they supported the program through their personal efforts and their finances because they considered it “costly, but worth it” (R. O’Connor).

Event Planning

Along with changes in the daily operations of the organization, some case study communities encouraged members to consider ways to incorporate earth care into their planning for special events. People who rented facilities for occasions like weddings and B’nai Mitzvah⁴

⁴ The Bar/Bat Mitzvah (Son/Daughter of the Commandment) is a ritual to celebrate that a Jewish child has reached the age at which he/she becomes personally responsible for practicing Jewish rituals, traditions, and ethics. For boys, this ritual occurs at age 13; for girls it occurs at 12 (Orthodox and Conservative communities) or 13 (Reform communities).

(coming of age rituals) were asked to follow guidelines that would uphold the earth care values of the community. For example, the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation developed a handout on “Greening Your Simcha (celebration)” to provide guidance on practices that would help members ensure that events were aligned with their community’s sustainability ethic. The guide begins with the statement:

Importantly, we view these guidelines as an opportunity to educate and inspire staff, congregants and guests as to the Jewish values that are at the heart of our JRC community, and to empower all to make conscious decisions in the life of the congregation. In doing so, may we be inspired to bring these values out into our work and home environments as well and truly live as stewards of the earth. (Green Simcha Guide)

The guide provides suggestions for conservation practices such as sending electronic invitations, selecting reusable decorations, and providing locally sourced food. The synagogue also has a kitchen with dishwashers and the guide informs people that they can provide table service for 100 people, including cloth napkins, if event organizers are willing to be responsible for washing and stacking the dishes. Interviewees also mentioned that they have a set of identical table clothes they are able to use for synagogue events because a group of women in the congregation take turns laundering them at home. The Green Team at Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple also encouraged members to “green” their celebrations, which inspired one family to purchase yarmulkes (skull caps) made from recycled materials for the guests who attended their daughter’s Bat Mitvah.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Facilities also provided a venue for implementing conservation practices such as energy conservation and pollution prevention. Energy efficiency in buildings is determined by three elements: the building envelope, building systems (appliances), and occupant behavior. To conserve energy, communities “greened” their building infrastructure, upgraded systems technology, and educated their members about ways they could help conserve energy in their houses of worship.

Green Infrastructure

Some communities replaced outdated facilities with new green buildings (HWM, JRC, OLA), while others incorporated green construction practices into building renovations (VM,

SJA) or expansions (MCC). Three of the monastic communities and two of the non-monastic communities had installed solar panels at the time of this study and two others were planning solar feasibility studies. Repairs also presented opportunities for making buildings more energy efficient such as when the Vineyard Church added insulation while replacing a worn-out roof. Smaller projects included weatherization of buildings and installation of interior storm windows to prevent heat loss from basement windows.

Technology Upgrades

Within the buildings, staff began replacing light bulbs with energy efficient CFL and LED bulbs. Such replacements were not always easy since older light fixtures often needed to be upgraded in order to accommodate newer bulbs, however lighting is one of the largest energy expenditures in houses of worship and improvements in this area could make a significant difference in energy consumption.⁵ Facilities staff and green teams also looked for Energy Star rated appliances when opportunities for upgrades arose during normal replacement cycles for boilers, water heaters and air conditioning units. At St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, the women who presided over the church kitchens were aware that one kitchen had a stove with a pilot lights that burned continuously and caused the kitchen to be warm even before the stove was turned on. The Green Committee researched possible replacement stoves with electric ignition systems that would fit the church's needs and meet budgetary guidelines provided by the Facilities Manager. They brought their recommendation to the Facilities Manager, who purchased the stove and later created a report documenting the decrease in the church's gas bill during the following year.

Conservation Behavior

Weatherized buildings and new appliances significantly lowered utility bills, but behavior change was also a key component in community efforts to conserve resources. Conservation behavior was the least expensive way to save energy but that did not necessarily mean it was easy. Across the cases, communities encouraged staff and members to adopt new practices when using the community's facilities. Office personnel saved energy by using fewer lights, turning

⁵ According to the Department of Energy, lighting accounts for 25% of the energy used in commercial buildings. Heating and cooling combined make up 32% of energy use but natural gas provides some of the heat; lighting uses the most electricity. (DOE 2008)

off computers at night, and printing fewer pages. Green teams also encouraged congregation members to keep doors closed to prevent loss of heat or air conditioning. “Doors-closed” campaigns were actually a challenge to implement because there was a tendency to leave doors open before worship services to welcome people as they arrived, especially in milder climates. Consequently, keeping doors closed required changing a long-standing social norm that was shared by a large portion of the faith community’s members.

Because practices like leaving doors open and leaving heat on at night were so habitual, it took considerable time and effort to engrain new behaviors into community practices. Green teams wrote newsletter articles and created handouts to explain what people could do to conserve energy. They also developed signs that could be posted at appropriate locations to remind people to turn off lights and keep doors closed. At the Madison Christian Community, a sign directly over the dishwasher in the kitchen reminded members not to run the machine until after the lights in the sanctuary were turned off so they would not exceed their utility’s threshold for base rate energy use and get charged a higher rate per kilowatt. Establishing these new habits required patience but the efforts paid off. St. Thomas Aquinas Parish reduced its energy use by 12% from 2009 to 2010 though a combination of upgrading to more efficient light bulbs and instituting practices such as turning off lights and office equipment when they were not in use, keeping exterior doors shut during cold weather, and posting information about Thermostat Procedures to remind people to decrease use of heat and air conditioning when buildings were empty.

Land Management

Land management provided further opportunities for conservation practices. In addition to large-scale projects, such as designating 2800 acres of land at St. John’s Abbey as an educational arboretum, case study communities adopted a variety of practices through which to integrate stewardship into smaller scale land management. At St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, the Facilities Committee adopted a policy in which two trees would be planted to replace any one tree that had to be removed from parish grounds. Communities also replaced lawn areas with rain gardens or beds of native plants in order to prevent stormwater runoff, reduce greenhouse gas emissions from mowers, and provide habitat for pollinators. Such changes often required research and staff training. At Our Lady of Angels convent, Sr. Corinne Wright, manager of the

Environmental Initiative, focused on land management as an activity area where she could effectively implement the sisters' mission to care for creation. She explained:

Where I could have the most influence was here on the grounds of the motherhouse. For example, I could say that we are not going to use pesticides and because the people who work on the grounds are your employees, they have to do what you say. But I also did it in an educational way, explaining that we wanted to reduce pesticide use to protect beneficial insects and birds.

Wright used information from the Pennsylvania State University College of Agricultural Sciences to develop an integrated pest management plan for the convent lands and shared that information with the grounds-keeping staff. According to Wright, once the groundskeepers had an understanding of "what was good and why," they could seek out additional information about ways to fulfill the sisters' earth care ethic. Although the staff had not come to the convent with prior knowledge of stewardship practices, they became knowledgeable about native plants and alternative pest management in order to fulfill the faith community's goal of caring for the land in a way that was beneficial to the environment.

CONSTRAINTS IMPOSED BY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Organizational structures offered opportunities for implementing earth care actions but they also imposed some constraints on sustainability initiatives. One constraint arose from the structures themselves when the venues available limited the types of actions that could be undertaken. A second constraint had to do with resource limits, both lack of funds and dearth of local services, that affected whether it was possible to make changes to a community's infrastructure and practices. Finally, the third issue that constrained implementation of actions was imposed by inconsistent human behavior, which reduced the efficacy of conservation practices.

Action Venue Limitations

In some cases, organizational structures constrained initiatives because the action venues available were not well suited to some types of earth care. At St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, the Green Committee was designated as a subcommittee of the Facilities Committee. This location within the organization was beneficial for the committee's goal of conserving energy: they were able to research efficient appliances and submit recommendations for technology upgrades to the Facilities Manager, who followed through on recommendations whenever they were financially

feasible. However, working through Facilities did not offer opportunities for environmental justice work even though social justice was one of the core missions of the Green Committee.

Environmental Justice was among the most complicated areas of activity for faith communities to integrate into organizational systems. Although a few communities had pre-existing social justice ministries in Corporate Social Responsibility or food donation programs that were suitable venues for addressing issues like environmental justice in company supply chains or local food security, others found it difficult to figure out how to take action. Debbie O'Halloran gave a detailed description of the challenges the Trinity Earth Shepherds faced when they tried to carry out environmental justice activities while participating in the GreenFaith program.

We're very conscious of the environmental justice piece because it's a requirement for GreenFaith. We have an alcove in the church foyer dedicated to our greening efforts and we change the articles there regularly to keep people informed. We also do educational programs three times a year and these tend to focus on topics that are connected to environmental justice like fracking and its effects on low-income communities. We're good at keeping people informed but I can't say we've kept up the action. GreenFaith organizes annual tours of the Ironbound area [a low-income area of New Jersey that is heavily polluted due to its long industrial history]. I was appalled. I had no idea there was an area like that so near by. But one local woman who came on the tour bus and talked to us told us that we can't just come in as middle-class outsiders and try to solve their problems. She said that the people there would resent it. So it's not easy to know what to do about environmental justice. It's not that you don't want to [do something], it's that you don't know how to.

Education was a type of action that could be easily incorporated into the organizational structure at O'Halloran's church but there was no venue for political advocacy or campaigning to clean up centuries of pollution in a neighborhood that no church members lived in.

Distance from the daily lives of suburban, middle-class members combined with venue limitations made environmental justice work a challenge, however some communities found solutions through partnerships with external organizations. The Madison Christian Community was able to engage in environmental justice work, helping low-income children gain access to green space and learn about raising and preparing healthy foods, through a partnership with a community center in a near-by neighborhood. The Lussier Neighborhood Center helped organize the summer program that brought children to the church to participate in the Kids in the Garden program. Similarly, the WindowDressers team at the First Universalist Church of Rockland collaborated with area Catholic churches to find low-income households that would benefit from

receiving storm window inserts. As a trusted institution, the Catholic churches could contact low-income members who might need windows, which allowed the program to reach people beyond the social circles of First Universalist's largely middle-class membership. These partnerships provided a means to compensate for limitations in the faith community's action venues, which did not include mechanisms for building long-term relationships with non-members.

Lack of Resources

Some initiatives faced constraints due to a lack of resources for funding or carrying out conservation practices. Interviewees consistently cited finances as a barrier to their desires to install green infrastructure such as solar panels and new windows. A few communities had access to state or local resources such as the Wisconsin Focus on Energy grant that paid for the solar panels at the Madison Christian Community. Similarly, St. John's Abbey benefited from Minnesota's renewable energy standard, which required utilities to increase the percentage of energy generated from renewable sources. As a result, Xcel Energy contacted the abbey to see if the monks would be interested in providing land for a solar field and, in 2009, they installed 1,820 panels that produce approximately 575,00kWh annually. The solar project was feasible because it was financed with \$2 million in grant money from Xcel Energy's Renewable Development Fund and from Westwood Renewables without any money from the abbey itself. In California, St. Thomas Aquinas Parish was only able to afford technology and landscape improvements because the city had a City Lights program that paid for installation of efficient LED light bulbs and offered rebates to offset the costs of upgrading to energy efficient boilers and replanting grounds with water-conserving xeriscaping. By contrast, faith communities in states without such resources faced significant financial barriers to fulfilling their goals of generating clean energy onsite.

In some areas, lack of resources extended beyond finances to create barriers for adopting other types of conservation behaviors. The Sisters of St. Francis at Our Lady of Angels in Aston PA were very pleased when they heard about a new supply company that carried 100% recycled copy paper. Unfortunately, it was located in York, 85 miles away from the convent, and the distance meant that shipping costs would make the paper too expensive. Thinking creatively, they worked out a financially viable solution by sending a convent truck halfway to pick up

paper supplies three times a year. As the supply company grew, shipping costs were reduced, thereby making it possible to have supplies of copy paper, recycled-content toilet paper and eco-friendly detergent, delivered straight to the convent. Sr. Ruth O'Connor, the convent administrator at the time of this research, explained that the sisters were willing to invest time and effort in this complex delivery system because they were not only purchasing products that fit their values, they also felt it was important to provide support to “companies that are trying to be eco-friendly.”

In spite of such support, companies could go out of business. The composting facility to which Our Lady of Angels sent their paper and food waste closed down after nearby residents complained about odors and the city government declined to renew the company's permit. This experience prompted Sr. Corinne Wright, former manager of the convent's Environmental Initiative, to comment that resource issues were a particular challenge for implementing their earth care ethic:

It's not an easy task to keep up with all this stuff. Like the loss of the composting; once the arrangements fall apart, it's lots of work to find other options—if any exist at all. It seems like people are always making things difficult so it's hard to keep our initiatives going.

Inconsistent Behavior

Structures provided venues through which to take action, but the efficacy of the actions undertaken often depended on the behavior of congregation members. Weatherized doors only prevent heat loss if they are kept closed and conservation practices for reducing use of resources like paper, electricity, and water only work if people adopt the recommended behaviors. Because changes to member behavior were crucial for many of the sustainability projects undertaken, inconsistent behavior emerged as one of the challenges interviewees mentioned frequently. It took time and effort to replace habits with new behavior and adherence to sustainable practices often fluctuated over time because people were unaware of the earth care ethic and associated practices. For example, in order to conserve energy at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, the Green Committee developed Thermostat Procedure Guidelines to be distributed to all facilities users and implemented a Closed-Door Procedure (with signage) to reduce air filtration during winter. Both of these projects required cooperation from building users and the committee found that the

messages had to be repeated regularly to foster consistent behavior change among the numerous people who used the facilities.

At Our Lady of Angels, one strategic area of the Environmental Initiative focused on reducing lawn area and expanding wildlife habitat, which included increased use of native plants in garden areas. The Initiative manager worked with grounds staff, sharing information about native plants and developing an integrated pest management policy. However, consistency in practices was occasionally affected by changes in staff. Once the goals of the Environmental Initiatives had been achieved, Sr. Corinne Wright stepped down from the position of Initiative manager. A few years later, she noticed that the mix of plants on the grounds was shifting back toward non-native plants:

But now I see backsliding. For example, we recently raised the issue of the landscapers reducing the number of native plants on the grounds. They said, “Non-natives don’t draw insects.” They had replaced the native vines on a pergola with wisteria.

“Natives draw insects!” Isn’t that the point? They don’t understand the big picture; they are just trying to make their work easier. The problem is that people change jobs so the guy there now is not someone I worked with earlier and he does not know why we were doing things a certain way.

STRUCTURES FACILITATED INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTATION

As the examples above indicate, green team efforts to implement sustainability initiatives were facilitated by organizational systems in two ways. First, religious organizations provided suitable pre-existing structures through which to take action. Second, those structures offered the potential for collaboration between sustainability champions and other members of the faith community, which expanded the capacity for integrating earth care into the various activity areas of the community and embedding it in the community culture (see Table 13.3).

Table 13.3 Enabling Factors Contributed by Faith Community Organizations

Enabling factors	Effects on Initiatives
Organizational Structure Worship Religious Education Ministries Administration Facilities management	Venues suitable for implementing actions
Collaboration within the community	Staff and Congregation participation expanded initiative capacity
Collaboration with external partners	Access to resources that increased efficacy and capacity

A faith community's organizational structure provided action venues through which to implement initiatives. A religious organization's regular worship services offered an arena for sermons and affirmations that integrated earth care into a community's religious values and practices while religious education programs presented curricula to guide children and adults toward an understanding of the connections between earth care and their faith traditions. Communities found channels for earth care in their social justice and spiritual development ministries where they added community gardens and organic food production to food donation programs, used building space for environmentally themed schools, designed environmental education curricula for summer camps, added environmental justice to Corporate Social Responsibility ministry, and developed eco-spirituality programs for retreat centers. Sustainability was also incorporated into daily operations for administering the religious organization. Staff adopted policies for purchasing greener supplies and revised the ways they carried out tasks in offices, custodial work, and grounds keeping. In addition to policy and behavior changes, earth care was integrated into maintenance of the organization's physical elements, its buildings, technologies, and grounds so that the faith community's physical space became an important venue through which to enact its earth-care ethic. In effect, the buildings and grounds were transformed into media for ministry: solar panels and community gardens served as visible manifestations of a faith community's values. Thus, working within a faith community's organizational structures made it relatively easy to take action because there was no need for new staff, new programs, or extensive revision to operational procedures. The importance of supportive structures was especially apparent in cases where green teams encountered difficulties implementing social justice or environmental justice actions because the action venues available in their organizational structures were not well suited to these efforts.

These examples of conservation practices also reveal that community collaboration was a crucial factor in initiative implementation. Many of the actions undertaken in these activity venues were implemented by staff or community members who were not on the green team, yet were motivated to act in support of the community's earth care ethic. Clergy, Religious Education Directors and teachers did most of the work to integrate earth care into worship services and youth education programs. Congregational members who were involved in other ministries added sustainability to their work, thereby increasing the number of activities that could be undertaken and expanding the capacity of the initiative. As manager of the

Environmental Initiative for the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, Sr. Corrine Wright described how helpful it was that community members in other ministry areas took action and integrated earth care into their work:

The investment group we belong to took up the fracking issue independently of us; that was a nice overlap. It gave me a chance to say, “Should I take this up or leave it to Sr. Nora?” It helps that people from other parts of the organization are also doing things to protect the environment.

The sisters involved in Corporate Social Responsibility perceived environmental justice as an aspect of their ministry and incorporated it into their work of their own volition, thereby expanding the areas through which earth care was integrated into community practices.

Cooperation from staff and members was equally important for implementation of conservation practices in administration and facilities management. Administrators, office workers, custodians, maintenance crews, and grounds keepers helped transform earth care ethics into practical daily behaviors. Sr. Corinne Wright’s story about new grounds-keeping staff who replaced native plants with “less insect-attracting” non-native plants further demonstrates how important collaboration was to the continued success of initiatives; it was not enough to have individual community members take action, the new practices had to be integrated into policies and management procedures so they would become procedural norms for future staff and volunteers doing those same tasks. In non-monastic communities, members were as important as staff since it was volunteers who washed the dishes that replaced disposables, took time to sort compost and recyclables from trash, donated their time to grow produce in community gardens, adapted to new practices such as use of electronic newsletters, and began considering environmental impact in their planning for special occasions.

In addition to collaboration within the faith community, collaboration with external partners provided resources that facilitated initiative implementation. Administrators developed relationships with companies that could supply “green” products for offices and custodians. Facilities managers drew on city and state programs to offset costs for infrastructure improvements such as energy efficient appliances, lighting, and weatherization. Land managers turned to local agricultural programs and state foresters for information on best practices in sustainable resource management. Garden ministries connected with food pantries that could help with distribution, environmental education ministries worked with community centers to coordinate outreach to low-income children, and projects to make low-income housing more

energy efficient benefited from partnerships with other religious organizations that could extend their capacity for outreach to the wider community. Thus, partnerships with external organizations helped faith communities find venues that enhanced their capacity to implement activities that would not have been possible solely through the structures of their own religious organizations.

SUMMARY AND DOMAIN INTERACTIONS

How Organizations Affected Initiatives

INTRODUCTION

As the context within which these faith-based sustainability initiatives were undertaken, religious organizations contributed procedures and structures that shaped initiative development and implementation. Earth care became embedded in the social norms of a faith community when operational procedures facilitated community engagement with initiatives and sustainability actions were integrated into multiple areas of the organizational structure. Chapters 12 and 13 described organizational procedures and structures that contributed to the development of the case-study initiatives. This section summarizes the findings from the two chapters and describes how the factors that organizations contributed to initiatives interacted with other domains. Because individuals, faith leaders, and congregations all participated in initiatives within the context of their religious organizations, Organization contributions and Domain Interactions are combined into one discussion instead of being treated separately, as in previous domain summaries.

ORGANIZATIONAL VENUES FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND DOMAIN INTERACTIONS

Religious organizations made significant contributions by providing operational procedures for establishing and managing green teams and organizational structures that served as venues through which to implement earth care actions. These organizational factors affected development of sustainability initiatives in ways that intersected with the other domains of activity. When organizational procedures and structures aligned well with individuals' plans, sustainability champions were able to operate effectively. Operational procedures offered opportunities for faith leaders to promote initiatives and influenced levels of involvement from congregations. Organizational structures provided venues for all three actor groups, individuals,

faith leaders, and congregations, to participate in initiatives. See Table 13.4 for an overview of enabling factors contributed by organizations and their interactions with other domains.

Table 13.4 Organization Contributions and Their Interactions with Other Domains

Contributions to initiatives	Effects on the initiative	Intersection with other domains
Operational procedures Group protocols Communication Decision processes	Facilitated creation and implementation of initiative Congregational involvement	<u>Individuals</u> : organize/manage green teams, interact with congregation <u>Faith Leaders</u> : influence decisions <u>Congregation</u> : engagement, affirmation
Organizational Structure Worship Religious Education Ministries Administration Facilities management	Venues suitable for implementing earth care Collaboration integrated earth care into multiple areas of the faith community	<u>Individuals</u> : efficacy of suitable actions <u>Faith Leaders</u> : opportunities for messages and organization management <u>Congregation</u> : Contribute supplemental actions

Individuals were able to act on their desire to address sustainability through the milieu of their faith communities by following operational procedures and integrating earth care into organizational structures, which contributed to the efficacy of their efforts. Champions created green teams by adopting affinity group formats and following practices that were customary in their communities. Application of established meeting management techniques that were not only familiar to members, but were also tried and true systems for organizing people and achieving goals, enhanced their ability to implement activities. Use of agendas and minutes kept data organized while project planning techniques facilitated development of initiatives. These techniques intersected with the Individuals domain where they contributed to the leadership capabilities of sustainability champions and increased the sense of efficacy for all the members of the green team.

Individuals were also affected by organizational protocols for groups that integrated religious rituals, fellowship practices, group study, and inclusive decision processes into green team management. These normative practices benefited the green teams in several ways. Religious rituals and group study of theology fostered individual commitment by reinforcing individuals' conviction that faith and earth care were connected, which motivated them to take action and helped them persevere over time. Individual commitment and perseverance were also enhanced by group study of earth care activities undertaken by other communities, which provided information about potential projects for their own initiative. Projects were selected

through inclusive decision processes that enabled individuals to incorporate personal interests into the earth care initiatives, thereby adding to their motivation to participate. Finally, shared activities such as group study and fellowship practices fostered supportive relationships among members of green teams, a factor that previous research (Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000) has shown to be important for developing and maintaining successful collaborative projects.

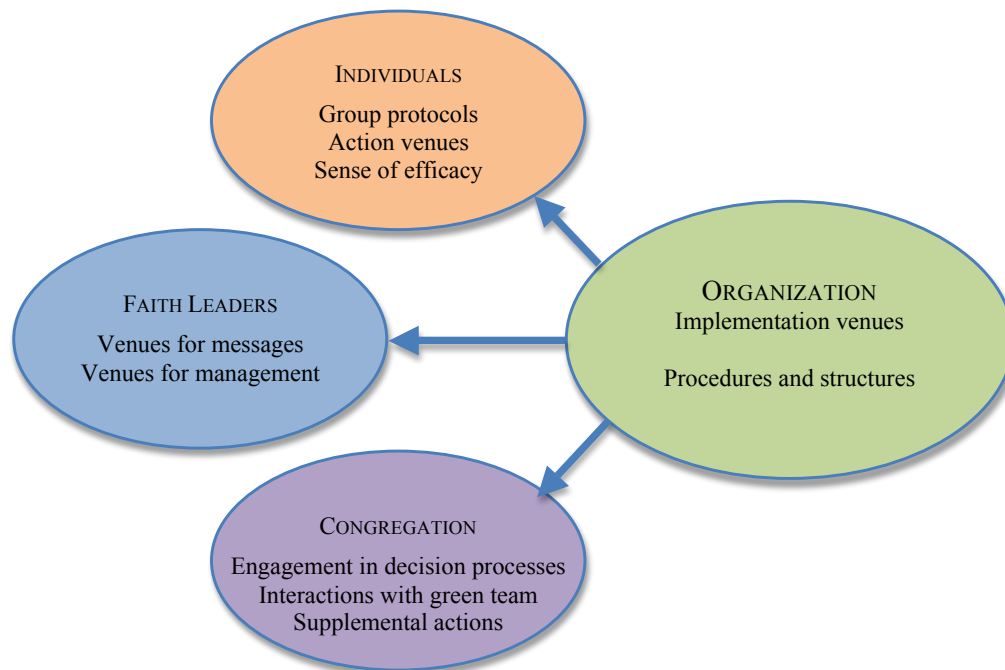
Organizational procedures that provided opportunities for interactions between individuals and congregations also affected development of initiatives. Processes for informing congregations about affinity group missions and reporting annual accomplishments fostered communication between green teams and the wider community memberships. At St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, where the Green Committee was particularly disciplined about posting meeting minutes and submitting annual reports, these practices increased member awareness of earth care activities. Katia Reeves, leader of the St. Thomas Aquinas Green Committee at the time of this study, noted that: “We do a lot and for the past couple of years, I have heard comments that our committee is the most active in the parish.”

Just as supportive organizational norms facilitated initiatives, a misalignment between expectations about group behavior and a green team’s actions could hinder initiatives. Adoption of a small group format associated with Bible study seemed to limit congregational participation in green team activities in one case and unfamiliar study and prayer practices seemed to reduce the appeal of eco-spirituality programs in another case. Thus, in some instances a poor fit between organizational norms for group behavior and the earth-care activities undertaken may have undermined efforts to integrate sustainability into the community’s social norms and contributed to a perception that earth care was the purview of a small group rather than a community initiative requiring everyone’s participation.

In addition to procedures for establishing and managing initiatives, organizational structures supplied the action venues for putting sustainability ethics into practice. These action venues made it possible for individuals, faith leaders, and congregations to participate in earth care. Individuals developed projects for implementation through the programmatic and administrative venues of their faith communities. They collaborated with clergy to integrate earth care into worship services, developed educational programs such as presentations and film series, and created new projects to supplement extant ministries like growing fresh produce for food pantries. Worship services provided faith leaders with a venue in which to share messages

legitimizing earth care as a faith issue through sermons and public affirmations while governance systems offered them a platform for promoting community-wide support for initiatives. Administrative systems and ministries also served as venues for members of the congregation to support initiatives by adding green practices to their work in offices, grounds keeping, and ministries. Actions by congregation members who were not on the green team, yet shared the conviction that earth care was a community ethic, were vital for integrating sustainability into the religious organizations in the case studies. Figure 5 illustrates the interactions between the organization and the other three domains of activity.

Figure 5 Interactions between Organizations and the Other Domains



EARTH CARE INTEGRATED INTO THE RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION

Religious organizations contributed processes for adopting earth care as a community mission, formats and procedures for effective green team operations, and structures through which to take action. When organizational norms aligned well with earth care initiatives, green teams were able to operate effectively and enlist support from their communities. Efforts to implement initiatives were enhanced when green teams were able to collaborate with staff and other members of their communities to integrate earth care activities into appropriate action venues provided by the structures of their religious organizations.

Earth care became embedded in the social norms of a faith community when it was integrated into action areas throughout the organization. One example of this embeddedness is illustrated by a story from the Madison Christian Community, where the death of a tree was woven into multiple, interconnected activities expressing the community's earth-care values. The community members were distressed to learn that the 175-year-old bur oak by their building was dying. The tree had a large cavity in its trunk and three independent arborists all agreed that it needed to be removed before it became a hazard to people walking under it to enter the church. A Bur Oak Task Force formed and organized a whole series of practices through which to incorporate the final year of the tree's life into the community's faith life. A four-week adult education series focused on relationships between trees and a sense of place, and studied biblical references to trees. A community member who was a professional storyteller told biblical tree stories and coached other members in the art of recalling and telling personal tree stories. The tree was also used for children's activities:

Children combed the grass under the tree like squirrels and filled grocery bags with acorns. One evening seventh- and eighth-grade confirmation students spread a large tarp on the education unit floor, separated good acorns from bad acorns, cracked the shells open, and picked out small chunks of pulp. A mother and daughter found a Native American recipe for acorn bread, which, placed on the altar, became the bread of life at Sunday worship, nourishing our spiritual hunger. The taste of acorn reminded us of all the ways a single tree nourishes human and nonhuman life: sheltering birds, squirrels, and bugs, and by inviting people to repose under the shade of its outstretched limbs. (Wild and Bakken 2009: 55)

In addition to education and worship activities, the congregation used the image of "tree as nourisher" as a theme for the financial stewardship campaign that year. The stewardship committee and the pastor explained that just as a tree transforms sun and rain into energy that sustains other creatures as well as itself "so our gifts to our congregation not only sustain the life of this worshipping community, but are spread abroad to our neighbors, our community and the creation" (Wild and Bakken 2009: 56).

Cross-organization projects like the tree activities were a hallmark of the earth-care mission at the Madison Christian Community, where Pastor Wild regularly brought experiences from time spent in the church gardens into sermons and education classes, but other cases had similar examples in which earth care was integrated into multiple areas of the organization. Chapter 8 described the story of the children at the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation, who brainstormed eighteen "pillars of their faith" that were written on cards and placed in each of the

eighteen caissons supporting their green synagogue. Monastic communities like Villa Maria developed interconnected activities such as the Land Retreats in which the land manager took groups of sisters out to walk the boundaries of their property and learn about the ecosystems under their care, which included the sustainably managed farmland and forests that had become venues through which they were fulfilling their ministries to nurture people physically and spiritually. These examples of interconnected activities being implemented through multiple venues within the religious organizations indicate that earth care had become embedded in these faith communities.

Chapter 14

CONCLUSION PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABILITY

This research project set out to better understand the experiences of faith communities that promote and practice environmentally sustainable behavior by examining the motivations and processes through which fifteen congregations in the United States developed sustainability initiatives. Previous scholarship on religious environmentalism focused on the development of “eco-theologies,” the proliferation of denominational statements of environmental ethics, and emergence of campaigns to promote faith-based responses to climate change, suggesting that the recent upwelling of such efforts indicated that religions in western countries were becoming greener. There has, however, been little exploration of the empirical experiences of faith-based environmental activities when they do arise. Therefore, this project examined faith communities that developed exemplary sustainability initiatives, which included multiple activities sustained over at least four years, in order to identify factors that facilitated and hindered emergence and implementation of their earth care efforts. After conducting field research and developing fifteen cases studies, cross-case analysis revealed that key contributions from individuals, community members, and organizational systems were just as important as theology for the emergence and continuity of these initiatives.

This is not to say that religion was unimportant. Faith communities are religious organizations that exist for the purpose of supporting members’ religious lives and, therefore, earth care could only become part of the community social norm if it fit into the religious mission of a community. Comparison of the fifteen cases indicated that earth care became integrated into the religious missions of the faith communities but that the process of doing so was not simple and did not unfold in the same way across the cases. Initiatives emerged in response to diverse triggers and followed diverse trajectories in their development. Despite these variations, analysis revealed a shared narrative threading through the assorted cases. In each

community, a few passionate individuals took the lead in proposing or organizing earth care initiatives for their faith communities. The development and maintenance of those initiatives was affected by the characteristics of the individuals who led the efforts and by their interactions with the faith leaders, congregation, and organization that comprised the faith community context within which they took action. Using these four domains of activity—Individuals, Faith Leaders, Congregation, and Organization—as an analytic framework made it possible to compare the cases and identify factors that enabled communities to develop effective earth care initiatives.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND INTERSECTIONS OF THE FOUR DOMAINS

Each domain made specific contributions to the initiatives: Individuals provided the leadership and effort that made them happen; faith leaders legitimated earth care as a faith issue requiring action from the community; the congregation supplied resources that determined the capacity for action; and the organization contributed venues for implementation. The extent and efficacy of these contributions was affected by enabling factors within the domains as well as interaction among the domains (see Table 14.1).

Individuals

Individuals provided the leadership and effort that made earth care initiatives feasible; they turned ideas into action and without them, nothing would have happened. Comparing the cases indicated that individuals who succeeded in developing initiatives shared two major characteristics: a sense of commitment to the task of taking action to care for the earth and a set of leadership capabilities suited to organizing an earth care initiative through the venue of a faith community. Both of these characteristics were enabled by specific factors. Commitment derived from a mixture of environmental and religious motivations that inspired individuals to take action and whether their lives provided a personal window of opportunity that allowed them to devote time and energy to earth care. However, commitment alone did not ensure that champions could organize initiatives; their success also depended on leadership capabilities. These capabilities were determined by factors such as sustainability knowledge and project management skills that provided the ability to plan and implement projects and coordinate volunteers. In addition, leadership capability was enhanced if the champions were long-time community members with institutional knowledge about organizational procedures and networks

Table 14.1 Key Contributions and Enabling Factors in the Four Domains of Activity

	INDIVIDUALS	FAITH LEADERS	CONGREGATION	ORGANIZATION
MAJOR CONTRIBUTION	Leadership	Legitimacy	Capacity	Implementation Venues
HOW CONTRIBUTION IS EVIDENCED	Champions with ability to organize initiatives	Messages explain faith community is called to care for the earth because of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theology • Community ministries and identity • Special role of religion 	Resources made available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human labor and knowledge on Green Team • Earth care activities by community members beyond Green Team • Material resources 	Opportunities for actions that aligned with organizational systems
KEY ENABLING FACTORS	<p>Commitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Environment ○ Religion • Personal windows of opportunity <p>Leadership Capability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability knowledge • Leadership Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Institutional knowledge ○ Project management • Embedded in community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Trust ○ Relationships 	<p>Religious Authority: Mechanisms for connecting earth care with values and practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sermons • Newsletters/blogs • Affirmations <p>Organizational Manager: Mechanisms for integrating earth care into practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorize initiatives/activities • Advise Green Teams • Advocate for support from other community groups 	<p>Earth care fit community identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected to previous activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Service ministries ○ Environmental projects ○ Land use <p>Participatory decision processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared learning • Concerns addressed 	<p>Operational procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green Team format and management • Communication with the congregation • Decision processes <p>Organizational structures as venues for action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worship services • Religious education programs • Administration • Facilities management • Ministries
EFFECTS	Ideas turned into action	Earth care integrated into social norms	Earth care integrated into community mission	Earth care actions able to be implemented

of personal relationships that facilitated their ability to integrate earth care into multiple areas of the religious organization. Individuals who were embedded in the community benefited from relationships and trust that made it easier to gain approval for initiatives and to gather support from faith leaders and the congregation.

These enabling factors, which contributed to individuals' commitment and leadership capabilities, were affected by intersections with other domains. Individuals who were long-time community members were familiar with operational procedures and organizational structures in the Organization domain. The project management skills they drew on were often drawn from these operational procedures and, therefore, were familiar to other community members. Similarly, individuals' networks of relationships expanded the reach of earth care into various areas of the organizational structure such as religious education programs and administration, thereby increasing the number of activities beyond what the members of a Green Team could accomplish alone. Leadership capabilities and trust also intersected with the Congregation domain, where members who perceived the earth care champions as effective leaders were more likely to join the Green Teams, thereby increasing the likelihood the team would have the critical mass necessary for durability. Finally, there was a two-way relationship between individuals and faith leaders. Faith leaders strengthened individuals' commitment to earth care by articulating religious messages describing earth care as an issue that required action from people of faith and reassuring them that acting on their faith was important even if the actions seemed inadequate. These messages contributed to individuals' motivations to act through the venue of their faith communities and helped them persevere by reinforcing the sense of intrinsic satisfaction that arose from performing actions that expressed religious values.

Faith Leaders

Faith leaders made an essential contribution to initiatives by legitimating earth care as a religious issue. Since faith communities are, first and foremost, religious organizations that exist for the purpose of fostering members' religious lives, it was crucial to explain why caring for the earth was expression of religious life. Faith leaders were able to legitimate earth care through their dual roles as religious authorities and organizational managers. As religious authorities, they explained how earth care fit into a community's religious values and praxis. They made their case by invoking religious teachings that prescribed moral obligations to care for people

and nature. In addition to these fundamental religious precepts, they connected earth care with extant ministry practices of personal devotion, social justice, and community service through which their faith communities enacted their religious values. Finally, they argued that people of faith had a special role to play in making society more environmentally sustainable by speaking out about morality, environmental justice, and hopeful visions for the future.

Faith leaders further promoted community engagement with earth care through their role as organizational managers. They authorized inclusion of environmental issues in mission discernment processes, encouraged individuals to create Green Teams, and approved proposals to undertake earth care initiatives. They used their knowledge of religious organizations to advise individuals and Green Teams about how to act on their desires to integrate earth care into religious life by recommending appropriate options such as environmentally themed religious celebrations that fit into liturgical calendars and working through denominational organizations to address issues that could not be solved at the local level. As managers of their religious organizations, faith leaders were also able to advocate for support of initiatives from boards of trustees and other committees, thereby reinforcing the message that earth care was an issue requiring action from the whole community, not just a core group of environmentalists.

Thus, faith leaders affected initiatives through interactions with the other three domains. Organizational structures provided opportunities for exercising religious and managerial authority. For example, worship services offered a venue for sharing authoritative religious messages about earth care as a faith issue through mechanisms such as sermons and affirmations in the form of announcements, celebrations of green accomplishments, and environmentally themed rituals. Organizational structures were also the channels through which faith leaders enacted their roles as managers who headed administrative hierarchies or influenced boards of trustees in accord with the governance system of their denominations. The organization's operational procedures provided the context for managers to authorize consideration of earth care during mission discernment processes and presented opportunities for lay faith leaders to share earth care messages with community members through study groups, educational presentations, and eco-theology retreats. Through these mechanisms, faith leaders interacted with the Congregation domain and encouraged the congregational membership to perceive earth care as a component of their religious values and practices, thereby integrating it into community social norms.

Faith leaders also influenced individuals. Religious messages and affirmations strengthened individuals' sense of commitment by contributing to their motivations to act and reinforcing their sense of satisfaction from engaging in work that expressed their religious values. Moreover, faith leaders' advice on how to take action through the venue of religious organizations helped Green Teams develop and implement activities, which added a sense of efficacy that helped sustain them over time. Even when some activities fell short, faith leaders bolstered individuals' commitment with a message that the actions themselves were valued as expressions of faith, in spite of uncertain outcomes, because, "God calls you to be faithful, not successful" (Rev. Ann Held).

Congregations

Congregations contributed the resources, human and material, that determined the scale of earth care activities undertaken within a community. For example, communities with extensive support had larger Green Teams, which meant more people to share knowledge and workloads, thereby expanding capacity while ameliorating burnout. Members also provided resources like funds and tractors that helped implement initiatives, as well as endorsing administrative decisions such as giving up income from leased farmland in order to replace agricultural fields with restored ecosystems. In addition, Congregational support increased capacity when people who were not on the Green Team supplemented earth care initiatives by incorporating sustainability into other areas of the religious organization such as office management, purchasing, groundskeeping, and religious education programs. Two factors had a significant effect on the levels of support initiatives received from congregations: 1) whether earth care became connected with community identity by linking it with previous practices and 2) whether congregation members participated in the decision processes for authorizing Green Teams and incorporating earth care into the community mission.

The first of these factors affecting congregational support was closely intertwined with the Faith Leader domain and the second intersected with the Organization domain. Faith leaders across the cases, both clergy and lay champions, made presentations linking earth care to previous practices in ministries focused on justice and community service. In a smaller subset of cases with land holdings, they also framed previous environmental activities and past land uses as precursors to sustainable land stewardship, thereby encouraging the congregation members to

perceive earth care as a continuation of historical traditions that defined the community. In cases where members engaged in outdoor activities like prairie restoration, gardening, tree planting, and bee keeping, there was extensive acceptance of earth care as an aspect of community identity. However, even in more urban areas where the “precursors to earth care” invoked by faith leaders were social justice and community service ministries like food pantries and health care programs, many of the cases developed widespread congregational agreement that these ministries were connected to earth care because environmental issues contributed to poverty, food insecurity, and ill health.

These precursor activities were entwined with community identity; they were ministry activities through which a community expressed its religious values. Cases that connected earth care to these ministries and, through them, to their community identity, had high levels of congregational support for their initiatives. The factor that influenced how widely the congregation accepted these connections came from the Organization domain, where the community’s operational procedures determined the processes through which a community decided to adopt earth care as an area of activity. Communities that followed participatory decision processes that allowed members to engage in shared learning about the connections between religious values and earth care and to address concerns about costs and activity selection had higher levels of congregational support for initiatives. Having participated in the decision to adopt earth care as an expression of their community mission, members of these congregations were more likely to contribute time and resources to support implementation of sustainability initiatives.

Organization

The organization provided opportunities for initiative implementation through its operational procedures and organizational structures. As noted above, operational procedures affected the processes for proposing and approving earth care as an area of activity for the community. They also provided formats for creating Green Teams and operational practices that were used to run meetings, plan and implement activities, and communicate with the congregation. These procedures intersected with other domains since knowledge of operational procedures enhanced the leadership capabilities of individuals while the organization’s decision processes affected levels of support from congregations.

Organizational structures contributed venues through which to implement earth care actions. Some of these structures connected earth care with the religious practices of the community. For example, worship services and religious education programs offered opportunities for faith leaders to share messages about earth care as a religious issue. Ministries also served as channels for action as environmental justice was incorporated into Socially Responsible Investment practices, community gardens and organic farming were incorporated into food donations, and energy efficiency was incorporated into *tikkun olam*, healing the world.

Structures for the administration and maintenance of the religious organization also served as implementation venues. Sustainability was integrated into community governance policies, where it affected supply purchases, office practices, building renovations, and facilities management. In cases with high levels of congregational support, these organizational structures made it possible for people beyond the Green Team to contribute to earth care by incorporating it into their work as administrators, custodians, groundskeepers, religious education teachers, clergy, and volunteers on ministry committees. These practices increased the number of activities undertaken without requiring additional effort from the Green Team, which added to the champions' sense of efficacy and satisfaction while helping prevent burnout. By making it possible to integrate earth care into a wide range of community activities, these supportive organizational structures facilitated the process of embedding earth care in community social norms.

SUMMARY

As the summary above makes clear, enabling factors within the four domains intersected to facilitate development of initiatives (see Figure 14.1). Individuals acted on their commitment and applied their leadership capability through the venues provided by religious organizations. If their actions aligned well with organizational procedures and structures, there was greater efficacy in the implementation of the earth care initiative. Faith leaders legitimated sustainability as a religious issue, which strengthened individuals' commitment while also encouraging the congregation to see earth care as an activity that fit into community identity and deserved support from the whole congregation. Congregational support was influenced by previous activities and ministries linked to community identity and by members' engagement in development of initiatives. Congregational engagement was facilitated by organizational procedures for participatory decision processes. Appropriate organizational structures also made

it easier for members of the congregation who were not on the Green Team to contribute to initiatives by incorporating sustainability into multiple areas of activity within the religious organization. Thus, sustainability became embedded in the faith communities through the intersections of enabling factors across the four domains.

Figure 6 Contributions and Intersections of the Four Domains



THE ROLE OF RELIGION

Although enabling factors such as decision processes and leadership capabilities were not specifically religious, religion did play an important role in motivating and sustaining these earth care initiatives. Since these initiatives were implemented through religious organizations, it was crucial that earth care activity be defined in relation to religious values and practices before it could be integrated into the faith community. These religious values combined with environmental concerns to motivate individuals. One of the characteristics shared by most of the champions who led these initiatives was their long-term membership and embeddedness in their faith communities. Religion was an important element in their daily lives and, consequently, may have been a stronger motivation for them than it would have been for “holiday” believers who only attend worship services on special occasions.

Clergy who became interested in earth care had to examine religious bases for promoting environmental action before they could integrate earth care into their pastoral work. Once they

defined the theological bases for earth care, they could share those teachings with their congregations, thereby reinforcing the commitment of individuals and encouraging the congregation to perceive earth care as an activity incumbent on people of faith. In faith communities with strong sustainability social norms, interviewees stressed that the congregation perceived earth care activities as public expressions of their community's religious mission. Congregations were proud that their solar panels and community gardens showed that they "walked the talk" of the religious values. Moreover, people felt that their initiatives were important for the task of addressing environmental crises because they were faith-based. Interviewees interpreted unsustainable resource use and consumerism as symptoms of a social worldview that needed to be changed, and argued that religion had a contribution to make by changing hearts and minds. In the words of Lucie Bauer, "This is where our spirit-filled lives come in. Without that, we can't make the changes that are needed. We need a sea change in consciousness and that is a spiritual task."

In addition to motivating action, religion played a vital role in sustaining initiatives. Individuals stressed that religious messages calling them to be faithful, not successful, made it possible for them to attempt new and difficult tasks, and helped them persevere when some of their efforts fell short. Moreover, the sense of satisfaction they derived from "living their values" strengthened their commitment and kept them going year after year. When asked whether practicing earth care through a faith community differed from practicing it through traditional environmental organizations such as the Sierra Club, interviewees said that religion helped them maintain a sense of hopefulness. Lynn Cameron summarized this perspective when she described the role of religious teachings and rituals in sustaining her work:

Here is another thing about being faith-based: there is this reminder that this is God's creation. So we take time to celebrate it, to enjoy it. You can't be frantically fighting all the time. We want to be hopeful. The worship and the hymns, the scriptures, they help us be hopeful. The Sierra Club likes to take people on outings, to connect them to nature and show them what they are preserving, but that is not the same as thanking God and realizing that you are related to all of creation.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research compared fifteen cases in which faith communities developed exemplary earth care initiatives in order to discern factors that contributed to their efficacy. The cross-case comparison identified specific enabling factors in four domains of activity that contributed to the

emergence and implementation of these initiatives. These results can be used to create a model that may serve as a guide for other communities that seek to develop similar initiatives. It would, however, be best to consider this model a starting point that presents hypotheses about enabling factors that can facilitate efforts to embed earth care in the social norms of a faith community. These hypotheses should be tested with additional research and surveys.

Additional research is necessary to address the selection biases in this data sample, which was socio-economically limited to predominantly white and middle-class congregations and geographically dominated by communities from northern Midwest and Northeast regions. There are numerous earth care efforts being undertaken by low-income faith communities and communities of color that did not fit the case selection criteria of initiatives with multiple activities sustained over four or more years. For example, the African American pastors of Pilgrim Baptist Church in Detroit have worked with Michigan Interfaith Power and Light to make energy efficient improvement to their church building and encourage other clergy in the region to join them in advocating for political action to address climate change because it will disproportionately affect low-income communities. In Los Angeles, a Catholic priest called together Hispanic women who attended Resurrection Church to ask for their help protesting the state governor's plan to build a prison in East Los Angeles in 1985. These women formed MELA, the Mothers of East L. A., an environmental justice organization that went on to participate in campaigns against construction of an incinerator and a hazardous waste facility in other low-income, minority communities in the region. Comparing cases such as Pilgrim Baptist Church and Resurrection Church's MELA organization with the fifteen cases in the dissertation sample would help determine whether there are additional factors that affect development of faith-based sustainability efforts in low-income communities of color.

A second limitation of the sample that should be addressed is the lack of data about whether regional variations affect factors that enable development of earth care initiatives. Sociologists have frequently noted that, "Things are different in the South," and this observation may be particularly applicable to research into the role of religion in motivating behavior. Therefore, future research should examine cases of earth care in faith communities located in southern states to determine whether regional differences affect the factors that enable development of initiatives.

It is also important to recognize that the fifteen case studies were affected by external variables such as tax codes, local resources for recycling and purchasing green supplies, and availability of knowledge resources through government agencies and universities. Research that compares single forms of earth care activities, such as sustainable forestry or solar panel installation, could assess the effects of specific external factors and provide information about how to improve policies and programs for promoting similar practices in more faith communities.

SEEDS OF HOPE

Although this study identified four domain contributions and a matrix of enabling factors that facilitated development of earth care initiatives in these fifteen cases, these results should not be interpreted as evidence that an initiative lacking in one or more of these factors would be a waste of effort. As the preceding chapters noted, there was tremendous variation across the case-study communities and several of them earned green certification or achieved significant reductions in energy use despite low levels of support from clergy or congregations. The accomplishments of the Green Teams in such cases are impressive, even if sustainability did not become deeply rooted in the social norms of their faith communities. These variations also illustrate why this study did not rank the outcomes of the initiatives or suggest that some cases were more or less successful than others. There is no simple metric for defining “success” across the cases. For example, a ranking that compared the strength of earth care social norms would differ markedly from a ranking that measured reduction of energy use.

All of the faith communities in this study succeeded in turning ideas into action and implemented successful earth care initiatives. The diverse pathways they followed and the variations in their activities indicate that there is no single “right” way to do this work. Communities were successful in developing and maintaining initiatives when they employed processes that were familiar and took action in ways that addressed individual champions’ interests, fit into the structures of their religious organizations, and were suited to the conditions in their local communities. The earth care work at the First Universalist Church of Rockland is a good example. The Green Sanctuary Committee developed projects focused on local food that helped a young couple start the first Community Supported Agricultural venture in Maine and helped local fishermen develop the first Community Supported Fishery in the world. They

achieved these successes by involving the congregation in their planning and selecting projects that aligned with faith-community interests. The committee members were delighted to discover that their efforts benefited their midcoast regional community as well as the church. But the story of their work had effects that rippled all the way across the Atlantic as their example inspired development of a second Community Supported Fishery (CSF) in Gloucester MA and eventually led to similar ventures in the UK after the BBC made a film about these two American CSFs.

The ripples that spread outward from this church in Maine demonstrate the importance of having stories that provide a repertoire of examples of faith-based actions. Hopefully, hearing about the diverse paths and actions undertaken by these fifteen communities will inspire others to think creatively about how to adapt these ideas into initiatives that are appropriate to their own communities. More Americans belong to religious organizations than any other voluntary associations. These religious organizations have, in the past, facilitated social change by challenging the status quo, articulating visions for a better society, and providing resources to help people adapt to changing social conditions. As more faith communities integrate sustainability into their social norms, they will help build capacity for making the institutional changes that are imperative in a world confronting a changing climate. In her analysis of how people in Maine respond to climate change, Lucie Bauer commented that:

I guess on climate change, people go in and out of denial but we just have to have hope. Can we reverse it? No. In “Awakening the Dreamer” [a symposium that tries to change people’s consciousness by focusing on the spiritual and justice aspects of climate change], there is a point where the poet asks, “What did you do when you knew?” That’s when you realize you have to do something. In doing is the seed of hope.

For people of faith who express a desire to take action and frustration that they are not certain how to do so, this study may provide inspiration about the possibility of finding a pathway to sustainability through the venues of their faith communities. The matrix of four domains and enabling factors presented in this dissertation is offered as a framework to help earth care champions take action and integrate earth care into their faith communities so that they too can sow seeds of hope.

APPENDIX 1

Interview Questions

Questions for Interviews on Faith-based Sustainability Initiatives

Italics indicate primary questions asked under each topic area. Subsequent notes and questions indicate subjects that were addressed through follow-up questions in order to probe for further information related to each topic.

1. Origins: How did these initiatives get started?

- *Who started it and why?*
 - Triggers, motivations
 - Did you have previous experience with this activity or something similar?
 - Why do this in the context of a congregation? (Objectives?)
 - Were there previous groups or activities in the congregation?
 - In the community?
- *Who joined in?* (Age, gender, personality, education, family)
- *And why?*
 - Outreach/recruitment/framing (religious and non-religious message framing)
 - Motivations of the participants (prior backgrounds)
 - Objectives of participating in the activity
- *Do some people participate more/longer than others? If so, why?*

2. Process/genesis: Top-down or bottom-up?

- *How does this group/project fit into the congregation?*
 - How does it connect with the congregational structure?
 - Is there an established process for organizing groups/activities?
 - Is there interaction with the pulpit, other internal programs, or denomination?

3. Process/functioning

- *How do you manage your projects/initiatives?*
 - Is there a core group?
 - How is the group organized? (Leadership/roles)
 - Were there previous structures/models/supports in place?
 - What types of activities are undertaken and why?
- *How do you decide what to do?*
 - How are decisions made?
 - What happens at a meeting?
- *Where do ideas for activities come from?*
 - Internally generated by individual/group
 - Local triggers or contexts
 - Participation in a denominational or parachurch program

- Participation in a secular program
- What are the objectives of the activities?

4. Factors affecting the activity

- *What helps you in this effort?*
 - External resources/partners/knowledge
 - Internal resources/support/encouragement
- *What challenges have come up and how have they been addressed?*
- *What advice would you give others?*

5. Outcomes

- *What do you see as significant accomplishments from this activity?*
 - How has it affected individuals/group/congregation?
- *How does doing this in the context of religion differ from a secular context?*
 - Has the sustainability initiative affected your perspective on religion?
 - Has the faith-context affected your perspective on the sustainability initiative?

Additional topics to listen for: role of science and politics

APPENDIX 2

Case Study Sites

Resource Management (Land Stewardship)

1. St. John's Abbey, Collegeville MN
 - a. Sustainable forestry (timber resource)
 - b. College uses land for teaching and research
2. Villa Maria Farm, Villa Maria PA
 - a. Forestry and organic farm (own CSA and tenant farmers)
3. Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, Aston PA
 - a. Restoration of woodlands, wetlands, and meadows as wildlife sanctuaries
 - b. Red Hill Farm CSA
4. Holy Wisdom Monastery, Mendota WI
 - a. Retreat center with restored prairie and woods, organic orchard
 - b. Green building conservation practices
5. Nazareth Farm, Kalamazoo MI
 - a. Restored forest managed for wildlife habitat; seeking conservation easement
 - b. Bow in the Clouds Preserve (prairie fen and forest) donated to land conservancy

Conservation Practices

1. Madison Christian Community, Madison WI (Evangelical Lutheran Church and United Church of Christ)
 - a. Energy conservation, rainwater capture for community garden, landscaping
2. Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor
 - a. Energy Conservation, resource reduction, community garden
3. Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation, Evanston IL
 - a. Platinum LEED construction, 2008
 - b. Environment integrated into religious education
4. First Parish Church of Newbury (UCC), Newbury, Mass
 - a. "Stewards of Earth and Spirit" 2006 vision
 - b. Gardens and energy efficiency
5. First Universalist Church of Rockland, Rockland ME
 - a. Energy conservation at church and in wider community
 - b. Community Supported Fishery
6. Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, New Brunswick NJ
 - a. Youth and adult education, social justice projects for Mitzvah Day, interfaith Earth Day and film series

Advocacy

1. Trinity Presbyterian Church, Harrisonburg PA (Presbyterian Church USA)
 - a. Campaigns against Mountaintop Removal Mining and hydrofracking; efforts to gain wilderness designation for undeveloped lands in Shenandoah Mountain area
2. St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, Diocese of San Jose, San Jose CA (Catholic)
 - a. Environmental Justice initiatives
3. Trinity Presbyterian Church, East Brunswick NJ
 - a. Environmental Justice tours of New Brunswick, hydrofracking education, ocean pollution education, active in national campaigns, participates in Clean Ocean Action
4. Temple Shalom, Aberdeen NJ (Reform Judaism)
 - a. Clean Ocean Action, hydrofracking education, support for EPA air quality

CITATIONS

INTERVIEWS

- Abramowski, Matthew. Villa Maria Administration. Villa Maria PA
- Armstrong, Greg. Director of Land Management and Environmental Education, Friends of Wisdom Prairie. Holy Wisdom Monastery, Madison WI
- Bauer, Lucie. First Universalist Church of Rockland, Rockland, ME
- Bohannon, Richard. Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville MN
- Boutwell, Paul. Land Manager, Holy Wisdom Monastery, Madison WI
- Bresnahan, Richard. Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville MN
- Brown, Ticia. Pastor, Community of Hope, UCC. Madison Christian Community, Madison WI
- Burt, Ann D. Director, Environmental Justice Programs, Maine Council of Churches
- Cameron, Lynn. Earth Care House Church, Trinity Presbyterian Church, Harrisonburg VA
- Cameron, Malcom. Earth Care House Church, Trinity Presbyterian Church, Harrisonburg VA
- Chodroff, Michael. Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, New Brunswick, NJ
- Churchman, Bill. Earth Care House Church, Trinity Presbyterian Church, Harrisonburg VA
- Cohen, Ann. Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple
- Eighmy, Kim. Madison Christian Community, Madison WI
- Goodhue, Edwina. Moderator. First Parish Church of Newbury, Newbury MA
- Grobe, Lewis (OSB). Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville MN
- Held, Ann Reed. Pastor. Trinity Presbyterian Church, Harrisonburg VA
- Jones, Virginia (SSJ). Congregation of St. Joseph of Nazareth, Kalamazoo, MI
- Keesey-Berg, David. Madison Christian Community, Madison WI
- Keesey-Berg, Sonja. Madison Christian Community, Madison WI
- Kenevan, Jeannie. Administration, Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville MN
- Kidder, Angela. Manager, Redhill Farm, Our Lady of Angels, Aston PA
- Kieffer, Walter (OSB). Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville MN
- Kroll, Tom. Land manager for the Abbey Arboretum, Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville MN
- Larson, Derek. Environmental Studies Department. Saint John's University, Collegeville MN
- Lepera, Judy. Earth Care House Church, Trinity Presbyterian Church, Harrisonburg VA

Libby, Kim. Port Clyde Fresh Catch. Rockland, ME

Malinger, Laurence. Rabbi, Temple Shalom, Aberdeen NJ

Marshall-Toth Fejel, Gretchen. Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor

Matthews, Tom. Madison Christian Community, Madison WI

McGuire, Gerard. Green Committee, St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, Palo Alto CA

Moreira, John. Land Manger. Villa Maria Farm, Villa Maria PA

Mundo, Frank. First Universalist Church of Rockland, Rockland, ME

O'Connor, Ruth Bernadette (OSF). Administrator. Our Lady of Angels Convent, Aston PA

O'Donnell, Barbara (HM). EverGreen Program Director, Villa Maria, PA

O'Halloran, Deborah. Trinity Presbyterian Church, East Brunswick, NJ

Reeves, Katia. Green Committee, St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, Palo Alto CA

Romeo, Frank. Land Manager Emeritus. Villa Maria Farm, Villa Maria PA

Siebert, Asher. Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple, New Brunswick, NJ

Smith, Lynne (OSB). Holy Wisdom Monastery, Madison WI

Smith, Neal. Former Director of Finances, Holy Wisdom Monastery, Madison WI

Stack, Erin. Deacon. First Parish Church of Newbury, Newbury MA

Stanley, Matthew. Senior Pastor. St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, Palo Alto CA

Strawa, Anthony. Director, Catholic Green Initiative. Diocese of San Jose, CA

Sweitzer-Beckman, Mike. Administrator, Holy Wisdom Monastery, Madison WI

Thurin, Jeanne (HM). Farm-based Environmental Education Director, Villa Maria Farm, Villa Maria PA

Tully, Chuck. Facilities Manager, St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, Palo Alto CA

Walgenbach, Mary David (OSB). Prioress, Holy Wisdom Monastery, Madison WI

Wild, Jeff. Pastor, Advent Lutheran Congregation, Madison Christian Community.

Wilson, Ken. Pastor, Vineyard Church of Ann Arbor, Ann Arbor MI

Wolfson, Margo. Temple Shalom. Aberdeen, NJ

Wright, Corinne (OSF). Manager, Environmental Initiative, Our Lady of Angels Convent, Aston PA

REFERENCES

- Abbate, Michael. 2009. *Gardening Eden: How Creation Care will Change Your Faith, Your Life, and Our World*. Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press
- Agyeman, J. and B. Angus. 2003. "The Role of Civic Environmentalism in the Pursuit of Sustainable Communities." *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*. Vol. 46, No. 3: 345-63
- Ajzen, Icek. 1988. *Attitudes, Personality and Behaviour*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Ajzen, Icek. 1991. "The Theory of Planned Behavior." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*. 50: 179-211
- Ajzen, I. and M. Fishbein. 1980 "A Theory of Reasoned Action." In *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall
- Albanese, Catherine L. 1990. *Nature Religion in America: From the Algonkian Indians to the New Age*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Arboretum Task Force. 1997. "A Green Banner: Values of an Arboretum at Saint John's."
- Arcworld.org. Alliance of Religion and Conservation. http://www.arcworld.org/about_ARC.asp
- Armitage, C. J., & Conner, M. 2001. Efficacy of the Theory of Planned Behaviour: A meta-analytic review. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 40(4): 471-499.
- Baer, Richard A. 1966. "Land Use: A Theological Concern." *Christian Century* 83
- Ban Ki-moon. 2015 <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/papal-encyclical-call-climate-action-ban-ki-moon> (Accessed March 2016)
- Benstein, Jeremy. 2006. *The Way Into Judaism and the Environment*. Vermont: Jewish Light Publishing
- Berry, Thomas. 1988. *The Dream of the Earth*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books
-----1999. *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future*. New York: Random House
- Black. 1970. *The Dominion of Man: The Search for Ecological Responsibility*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
- Boyd, Heather H. 1999. "Christianity and the Environment in the American Public." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 38: 36-44
- Britz, Jennifer Delahunty. 2003. "EverGreen!" *Saint John's Magazine* 41.2: 6-15 (Winter 2003)
- Brown, Edward R. 2006. *Our Father's World: Mobilizing the Church to Care for Creation*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006

- Brune. 2015. <http://content.sierraclub.org/press-releases/2015/06/sierra-club-statement-pope-francis-s-encyclical> (Accessed March 2016)
- CARA 2015. Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, Georgetown University. <http://cara.georgetown.edu/caraservices/requestedchurchstats.html> (Accessed February 2015)
- Carr, Wylie, Michael Patterson, Laurie Yung, and Daniel Spencer. 2012. "Evangelical Religious Beliefs and Perceptions of Climate Change." *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 6.3: 276-99
- Cialdini, R. B., Reno, R. R., & Kallgren, C. A. 1990. A Focus Theory of Normative Conduct: Recycling the concept of norms to reduce littering in public places. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58(6): 1015-1026.
- Clements, John M., Aaron M. McCright, and Chenyang Xiao. (2014) "An Examination of the 'Greening of Christianity' Thesis Among Americans 1993-2010." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 53(2): 373-91
- Cohen-Kiener, Andrea. 2009. *Claiming Earth as Common Ground: The Ecological Crisis through the Lens of Faith*. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing.
- Congregationalism. First Parish Church of Newbury webpage. <http://firstparishofnewbury.org/about-us/congregationalism/> (Accessed Sept. 28, 2015)
- CRL Anonymous. 2014. "Ecology in Action." *Catholic Rural Life Magazine*. Summer 2014
- David DeCosse, Edwin Maurer and John Farnsworth. "Pope Francis' 'Common Home' encyclical is a game changer." Special to the *San Jose Mercury News*. June 18, 2015 http://www.mercurynews.com/opinion/ci_28341858/david-decosse-edwin-maurer-and-john-farnsworth-pope (Accessed March 2016)
- DeLashmutt, Michael. 2011. "Church and Climate Change: an Examination of the Attitudes and Practices of Cornish Anglican Churches Regarding the Environment." *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 5.1: 61-81
- DOE. (2008) *2008 Buildings Energy Data Book*, Section 3.1.4, 2008. <http://www.c2es.org/technology/overview/buildings>
- De Young, Raymond. 2000. "Expanding and Evaluating Motives for Environmentally Responsible Behavior." *Journal of Social Issues* 56 (3): 509-26
- Eckberg, D. L. and T. J. Blocker. 1989. "Varieties of Religious Involvement and Environmental Concerns: Testing the Lynn White Thesis." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 28: 509-17

- Environmental Initiatives. 2000. Brochure published by Environmental Initiatives Core Group of The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia.
- Epstein, Rebecca. 2010. Rosh Hashanah, Second Day Sermon. (Sept. 10, 2010/5771)
- Evenson, Alex. 1999. "Saint John's History: Brother George Primus." *Sagatan Seasons* 2.3: 5 (Autumn 1999)
- Fowler, Robert Booth. 1995. *The Greening of Protestant Thought*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press
- Fox, Matthew. 1988. *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ: The Healing of Mother Earth and the Birth of a Global Renaissance*. San Francisco: Harper & Row
- Garden. <http://www.saintjohnsabbey.org/working/garden.html> (Accessed May 27, 2013)
- GC 2013. St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Green Committee Annual Report 2012-1013. <http://paloaltocatholic.net/documents/2015/5/Green%20Committe%20Annual%20Report%202012-2013.pdf> (Accessed Dec. 31, 2015)
- Glacken, Clarence. 1967. *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California Press
- Glovin, Mark. 2010. "The Technology of Community: A Reflection on Our Green Sanctuary Certification." Sermon delivered Jan. 31, 2010
- Gottlieb, Roger. 2006. *A Greener Faith: Religious Environmentalism and Our Planet's Future*. Oxford University Press
- Gottlieb, Roger. 2007. "Religious Environmentalism: What it is, Where it's Heading and Why We Should be Going in the Same Direction." *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture* 1: 81-91
- Greeley, Andrew. 1993. "Religion and Attitudes toward the Environment." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 32.1: 19-28
- Green Simcha Guide. N.d. "Greening Your Simcha: JRC's Environmentally Preferred Simcha Plan." Jewish Reconstuctionist Congregation, Evanston, IL.
- Greenberg, M. R. 2005. Concern about Environmental Pollution: How Much Difference Do Race and Ethnicity Make? A New Jersey Case Study. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 113(4), 369–374. <http://doi.org/10.1289/ehp.7611>
- GreenFaith Program (<http://greenfaith.org/>)

- Guardian. 2015. "The Guardian view on Laudato Si': Pope Francis calls for a cultural revolution." Editorial. *The Guardian*. June 18, 2015.
<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jun/18/guardian-view-on-laudato-si-pope-francis-cultural-revolution> (Accessed March 2016)
- Guth, J. L., J. C. Green, L. A. Kellstedt, and C. E. Smidt. 1995. "Faith and the Environment: Religious Beliefs and Attitudes on Environmental Policy." *American Journal of Political Science* 39: 364-82
- Hand, Carl M. and Kent D. Van Liere. 1984. "Religion, Mastery-Over-Nature, and Environmental Concern," *Social Forces* 37: 555-70
- Harper, Fletcher. 2012. "Beyond Belief: Effective Religious Leadership on Energy and Climate Change." In Mallory McDuff (Ed.) *Sacred Acts: How churches are working to protect Earth's climate*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers
- Harrison, Peter. 1998. *The Bible, Protestantism, and The Rise of Natural Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Hessel, Dieter T. 1996. *Theology for Earth Community*. New York: Orbis Books
- Hines, J. M., H. R. Hungerford, and A. N. Tomera. 1987. "Analysis and Synthesis of Research on Responsible Environmental Behavior: A Meta-Analysis." *Journal of Environmental Education*. 18.2: 1-8
- Hirst, Stan. 2015. Laudato Si—Hopefully a Game Changer. Suzuki Elders. July 26, 2015
<http://www.suzukielders.org/laudato-si-hopefully-a-game-changer/> (Accessed March 2016)
- Interfaith Power and Light (<http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/>)
- IPL. Interfaith Power and Light. Mission and History.
<http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/about/mission-history/>
- IUCN 1991. IUCN/UNEP/WWF. *Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living*. Gland, Switzerland. (IUCN - The World Conservation Union, UNEP - United Nations Environment Programme, and WWF - World Wide Fund for Nature).
- Jung, Hwa Yol. 1972a "Ecology, Zen, and Western Religious Thought." *Christian Century* 89
- Jung, Hwa Yol. 1972b. "The Ecological Crisis: A Philosophic Perspective, East and West." *Bucknell Review* 20: 25-44
- JVL. Jewish Virtual Library <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/kashrut.html>

- Kanagy, Conrad L. and Fern K. Willits. 1993. "A 'Greening' of Religion? Some Evidence from a Pennsylvania Sample." *Social Science Quarterly* 73, No. 3: 674-83
- Kaplan, Stephen. 1990. "Being Needed, Adaptive Muddling, and Human-Environment Relationships." In R. I. Selby, K.H. Anthony, J. Choi, and B. Orland (Eds.) *Coming of Age*. Oklahoma City, OK: EDRA 21: 19-25
- 2000. "Human Nature and Environmentally Responsible Behavior." *Journal of Social Issues*, 56(3): 491-508
- Kearns, Laurel. 1996. "Saving the Creation: Christian Environmentalism in the United States." *Sociology of Religion* 57: 55-69
- Kearns, Laurel. 1997. "Noah's Ark Goes to Washington: A Profile of Evangelical Environmentalism." *Social Compass*, Vol. 44, No. 3: 349-66
- Keeley, Brian. 2007. *Human Capital: How What You Know Shapes Your Life*. OECD Insights <https://www.oecd.org/insights/humancapitalhowwhatyouknowshapessyourlife.htm>
- Keesey-Berg, David. 2003. "This Gifted Land." Unpublished essay. Madison Christian Community.
- Keesey-Berg, Sonja. N.d. "Garden History." Unpublished essay. Madison Christian Community
- Kempton, W., J. Boster, and J. Hartley. 1995. *Environmental Values in American Culture*. Cambridge: MIT Press
- Kingsolver, Barbara, Steven L. Hopp, and Camille Kingsolver. (2007) *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life*. New York: Harper-Collins
- Kinsley, David. 1996. *Ecology and Religion: Ecological Spirituality in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall
- Laser, Rachel. Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. "Reform Movement Welcomes Vatican's Environmental Encyclical. June 18, 2015 <http://www.rac.org/reform-movement-welcomes-vaticans-environmental-encyclical> (Accessed March 2016)
- Leiserowitz, A. & Akerlof, K. 2010. *Race, Ethnicity and Public Responses to Climate Change*. Yale University and George Mason University. New Haven, CT: Yale Project on Climate Change. <http://environment.yale.edu/uploads/RaceEthnicity2010.pdf>
- Lorenzoni, I., Nicholson-Cole, S. A., & Whitmarsh, L. 2007. "Barriers perceived to engaging with climate change among the UK public and their policy implications." *Global Environmental Change*, 17: 445-459
- Lowe, T., Brown, K., Dessai, S., de Franca Doria, M., Haynes, K., and Vincent, K. 2006. "Does tomorrow ever come? Disaster narrative and public perceptions of climate change."

- Public Understanding of Science*, 15: 435-457.
- MACUCC (2011). "Going Green Helps Church Bloom." United Church of Christ, Massachusetts Conference, online newsletter. Dec. 7, 2011. <http://www.macucc.org/newsdetail/112206> (Accessed July 3, 2013)
- Malinger, Lawrence. 2010a. "In the Middle." Sermon
 ----- 2010b. "The Rabbi Writes." Sermon delivered on Sept. 4, 2010
 ----- 2010c. "Temple Shalom and Greenfaith" Sermon for Rosh Hashanah 5771 (Sept. 9, 2010)
- McDuff, Mallory. 2010. *Natural Saints: How People of Faith are Working to Save God's Earth*. Oxford University Press
- McFadden, Steven. 2004. "The History of Community Supported Agriculture." Rodale Institute. <http://www.newfarm.org/features/0104/csa-history/part1.shtml>
- McFague, Sallie. 2001. *Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press
- McHarg, Ian. L. 1969. *Design with Nature*. Garden City, NY: Natural History Press.
- McKenzie-Mohr, Doug and William Smith. 1999. *Fostering Sustainable Behavior: An Introduction to Community-Based Social Marketing*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society
- McNutt, Marcia. 2015. "The Pope tackles sustainability." *Science*. Vol. 345:1429. Sept. 19, 2015 (Accessed March 2016)
- Moody, Michael. 2002. "Caring for Creation: Environmental Advocacy by Mainline Protestant Organizations." In Robert Wuthnow and John H. Evans (Eds.) *The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism*. Berkeley: University of California Press
- Morris, Aldon. 1984. *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*. New York: Free Press
- Morris, Aldon D. and Carol McClurg Mueller, 1992. (Eds.) *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*. New Haven: Yale University Press
- Nash, Roderick. 1967. *Wilderness and the American Mind*, (Fourth Edition 2001). New Haven: Yale University Press
- Nash, Roderick. F. 1989. "The Greening of Religion." In *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. 1968, 1991. *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man*. Kuala Lumpur: Foundation for Traditional Studies, 1968 and New York: Harper Collins,

- National Council of Churches. 1998. *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*. Nashville: Abingdon Press
- Nigbur, D., Lyons, E., and Uzzell, D. (2010). Attitudes, norms, identity and environmental behaviour: Using an expanded theory of planned behaviour to predict participation in a kerbside recycling programme, *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 49.2: 259 – 284
- Nrpe.org. National Religious Partnership for the Environment. <http://www.nrpe.org/history.html>
- O'Neill, Saffron and Sophie Nicholson-Cole. 2009. "Fear won't Do It: Promoting Positive Engagement with Climate Change Through Visual and Iconic Representations." *Science Communication* 30.3: 355-79
- OLA CSR. Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia *Corporate Social Responsibility* webpage http://www.osfphila.org/justice_peace/csr2 (Accessed Nov. 18, 2015)
- Osfphila.org. http://www.osfphila.org/justice_peace/csr2. Peace and Justice ministry webpage for The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. (Accessed May 29, 2015)
- OSG. Webpage for Our Secret Garden Indoor/Outdoor Nursery and Preschool. <http://www.oursecretgarden.org/aboutus.html> (Accessed Dec. 9, 2015)
- Palmer, Martin with Victoria Finlay. 2003. *Faith in Conservation: New Approaches to Religions and the Environment*. Washington DC: The World Bank
- Passmore, John. 1974. *Man's Responsibility for Nature: Ecological Problems and Western Traditions*. New York: Scribner's
- Pew 2015. "The Future of the World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050." Pew Research Center, Religion and Public Life. April 2, 2015
- PEW 2015. "A Deep Dive Into Party Affiliation" Pew Research Center, April, 2015
- Pirkl, Margaret, OSF. N.d. "The Cosmic Christ." Undated essay.
- Pope Francis. 2015. "*On Care for Our Common Home: Laudato Si Pamphlet*" (pdf). *Our Sunday Visitor*. Retrieved March 2016
- Presbyterian Church (USA). 1990. *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*. General Assembly Report, 1990
- *Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development*. General Assembly Report, 1996
- Proctor, James D. and Evan Berry. 2005. "Social Science on Religion and Nature." In *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*. London and New York: Continuum: 1571-1577

- Rasmussen, Larry L. 1996. *Earth Community, Earth Ethics*. New York: Orbis Books
- Robinson, Tri and Jason Chatraw. 2006. *Saving God's Green Earth: Rediscovering the Church's Responsibility to Environmental Stewardship*. Norcross, GA: Ampelton Publishing, 2006
- Rose, Elizabeth. 2008. "A Matter of Faith." *The Newburyport Current*, Newburyport, MA. (GateHouse News Service). Posted Sept. 11, 2008 @ 01:39 PM
- Rosen, Brant. 2008. "That I May Dwell Among Them" JRC Construction Diary blog posted February 8, 2008
- 2008b. Rosh Hashanah Sermon. Oct. 2008/5769
- 2011a. "As Long as There are Slaughterhouses, There Will be Battlefields." Yedid Nefesh Blog. Posted August 26, 2011
- 2011b. "Is the Bible Destroying Creation." Yedid Nefesh Blog. Posted Sept. 2, 2011
- 2013. "Tu B'shevat in the Diaspora: Celebrating the Unseen." Yedid Nefesh Blog. Posted January 25, 2013
- Roszak, Theodore. 1969. *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition*. University of California
- Sabin, Scott C. 2010. *Tending to Eden: Environmental Stewardship for God's People*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press
- Santmire, Paul H. 1970. *Brother Earth: Nature, God and Ecology in Time of Crisis*. New York
- Sherkat, Darren E. and Christopher G. Ellison. 2007. "Structuring the Religion-Environment Connection: Identifying Religious Influences on Environmental Concern and Activism." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 46.1: 71-85
- Shirley, Betsy. 2011. "Sister Act." *Sojourners*. April, 2011
- Sittler, Joseph. 1954. "A Theology for Earth." *Christian Scholar*, Vol. 37: 177-79
- Sittler, Joseph. 1964, 2004. "The Care of the Earth." In *The Care of the Earth and Other University Sermons*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press: 49-62
- Sittler, Joseph. 1970. "Ecological Commitment as Religious Responsibility." *Zygon*, Vol. 5:
- Skolimowski, Henryk. 1985. *Eco-Theology: Toward a Religion of Our Times*. Madra: India
- Sleeth, Matthew. 2006. *Serve God, Save the Planet: A Christian Call to Action*. Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing

- Smidt, Corwin E. 2003. *Religion As Social Capital: Producing the Common Good*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press
- Smith, Neal. 2010. "Care for the Earth: A Longstanding Monastery Tradition." *Benedictine Bridge*, April 15, 2010
- Snow, David. A., Calvin Morrill, and Leon Anderson. 2003. "Elaborating Analytic Ethnography: Linking Fieldwork and Theory." *Ethnography*, 4(2): 181-200
- STA 2009. Green Committee Mission Statement. St. Thomas Aquinas Parish. Palo Alto CA
- Stern, Paul C. 2005. "Understanding individuals' environmentally significant behavior." *Environmental Law Reporter: News and Analysis*, 35, 10785–10790
- Stoll. 1997. *Protestantism, Capitalism, and Nature in America*. University of New Mexico Press
- Suzuki, David T. 1953. "The Role of Nature in Zen Buddhism." *Erano-Jahrbuch*, Vol. 22: 293
- SWMLC 2007. Webpage article for Bow in the Clouds Preserve. Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, Kalamazoo MI. <http://www.swmlc.org/content/bow-clouds> (Accessed 6/3/15)
- Tarakeshwar, Nalini, Aaron B. Swank, Kenneth Pargament, and Annette Mahoney. 2001. "The Sanctification of Nature and Theological Conservatism: A Study of Opposing Religious Correlates of Environmentalism." *Review of Religious Research*. 42.4: 387-404
- Taylor, Bron. 2010. *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future*. Berkeley: University of California Press
- Taylor, Sarah McFarland. 2000. *Green Sisters: A Spiritual Ecology*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press
- Trinity LES. Website for the Little Earth Shepherds Preschool Learning Center at Trinity Presbyterian Church, East Brunswick, NJ. <http://www.trinity-pc.org/les/about/> (Accessed Dec. 9, 2015)
- Trinity-pc.org. Website for Trinity Presbyterian Church of East Brunswick, NJ. <http://www.trinity-pc.org/who-we-are/how-our-church-is-structured/>
- Tuan, Yi-Fu. 1968. "Discrepancies between Environmental Attitude and Behavior: Examples from Europe and China." *The Canadian Geographer*, Vol. 12: 176-191. Reprinted in David and Eileen Spring. Eds. *Ecology and Religion in History*. Harper Torchbook, 1974: 91-113
- Tucker, Mary Evelyn. 2003. *Worldly Wonder: Religions Enter Their Ecological Phase* (Master Hsuan Hua Memorial Lecture). Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company

- Tveit, Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse. 2015. "Statement on the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*." General Secretary of the World Council of Churches. June 18, 2015
<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/general-secretary/statements/statement-by-the-wcc-general-secretary-rev-dr-olav-fykse-tveit-on-the-encyclical-letter-laudato-si2019-of-the-holy-father-francis-on-care-for-our-common-homencis> (Accessed March 2016)
- United Nations General Assembly. (March 20, 1987). "Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future; Transmitted to the General Assembly as an Annex to document A/42/427 - Development and International Co-operation: Environment; Our Common Future, Chapter 2: Towards Sustainable Development"
- Uscsb.org. Website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.
<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/liturgy-of-the-word/universal-prayer.cfm> (Accessed Dec. 31, 2015)
- Veldman, Robin Globus, Andrew Szasz, and Randolph Haluza-DeLay. 2012. "Introduction: Climate Change and Religion—A Review of Existing Research." *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*. 6.3: 255-75
- Walgenbach, Mary David, OSB. 2010. "Leadership in a Benedictine Community." *Benedictine Bridge*, March 15, 2010
- White, Lynn, Jr. 1967. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis." *Science* Vol. 155: 12-3-7. Reprinted in Roger S. Gottlieb, (Ed.). 1996. *This Sacred Earth*. New York: Routledge
- Wild, Jeff and Peter Bakken. 2009. *Church on Earth: Grounding Your Ministry in a Sense of Place*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress
- Wilson, Ken. 2011. "A Biblical Basis for Creation Care." In Boorse et al. *Loving the Least of These: Addressing a Changing Climate*. National Association of Evangelicals.
- Wilson, Ken. 2007. "The Evangelical Awakening to Environmental Concern." Presented at the *Lets Tend the Garden Conference* (Sept. 20, 2007)
- Wondolleck, Julia M. and Steven L. Yaffee. 2000. *Making Collaboration Work: Lessons from Innovation in Natural Resource Management*. Washington DC: Island Press
- WWJD. What Would Jesus Drive. <http://www.whatwouldjesusdrive.info/intro.php>
- Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology (<http://fore.research.yale.edu/>)
- Yardley, Jim, and Laurie Goodstein. 2015. "Pope Francis, in Sweeping Encyclical, Calls for Swift Action on Climate Change." *The New York Times*. June 18, 2015 (Accessed March 2016)

Yearwood, Pauline Dubkin. N.d. "Chicago's Green Synagogue." *The Chicago Jewish News: Special Issue*

Yin, Robert K. 1994. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Second Edition. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications