

Building an Effective Bioregional Movement

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9/17/02

I want to encourage some more conversation before the congress begins and during the congress on the topic of building the bioregional movement.

In my view, we do not now have an effective movement. We have a scattered host of individual people who have a deep love for the basic bioregional vision. And perhaps even our vision has become somewhat confused or at least very diversely stated.

Any relevant movement today is organized from the local level up. It cannot be organized from the top down. The present world system of human processes has been and is being organized from the top down. We need to build a world system of human social processes that is organized from the local scope out toward the wider and wider scopes. If the bioregional movement is going to give some leadership to the whole, it needs to be organized in that way as well.

What this means is placing some emphasis upon the formation of local groups that meet perhaps four times a year and are comprised of members who contribute a minimum of \$100 and 100 hours of time each year to being this movement. Then each of these local groups might direct some of their time and money to putting into being a bioregional office for their area of the continent.

I don't know for sure what an area of the continent looks like, but as an example let us take the lower Great Prairie consisting of most of the land in the states of Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. Let us suppose the office set up for this area had the main task of encouraging the formation of bioregional groups in every local region in that area.

And what is a local region? A local region needs to be small enough that it is viable for people to meet together four times a year. And a local region needs to be big enough to qualify as a meaningful contiguous somewhat self-sustaining ecosystem.

Now let us imagine that every area of the entire continent has such an office and has such a local organizing effort taking place. At that point we would have an effective movement. Then let us imagine that each of these area offices would be willing to spend some of their energy and money in support of a continental office. We might lean on whatever good work has been done by the Turtle Island Offices and by BANA through the years, but we would have something entirely new. We would have a movement operating from the bottom up that was building consensus and giving support and direction to those efforts that are continental in scope.

Perhaps we don't have the will or the energy to do something like this. Perhaps we don't know why we should do something like this. In my view, that "WHY" can only be answered if being the bioregional movement genuinely ties into the planet-wide task of ENDING CORPORATE RULE and building in its place some workable political, cultural, and economic fabrics that are genuinely of the people, by the people, and for the people rather than being dependent pawns of corporate globalization.

Democracy and Ecology are joined at the hip. Until our political systems are pristinely democratic, we do not have the possibility of winning the needed victories for our ecological

systems. People have to be trained to be ecologically wise citizens, but people at least have the possibility of changing through such training. Corporations do not have the possibility of that sort of change. Corporations, however wondrous they have been, are the last remnants of medieval feudalism. However modern their technologies and some of their ideas may be, corporations are structurally an obsolete social form. That some of them behave better than the norm does not contradict this assessment. The norm is only slightly higher than the behaviors of Enron, and that norm is destroying the planet.

The first step that the bioregional movement and all other progressive movements must be willing to take is to restore whatever fragments of democracy still remain and use that power to curtail the undisciplined anarchy of the corporate world. This is something that must be done in one decade's time.

In two decades' time, we must be on our way toward building appropriate replacements for these obsolete corporate structures. If you want to call these replacements a new type of corporation, I don't mind; but the nature of these organizations needs to be very different. In five decades' time, we must be dealing with the reversal of almost every current human trend.

Surely such urgency and such purposes are motivation enough to ask people to meet four times a year and devote their \$100 and their 100 hours to the tasks they find themselves called to perform within this overall context.

Education is surely one of those tasks. Most of the people of this continent are misinformed and colluding with the present system, but most of them are not hopelessly evil people. There are millions of people (billions world-wide) who are ready to hear a relevant call to meaningful engagement. The harvest is already prepared, but the harvesters are too few.

I suggest that some of our congress discussion be on this general topic.