Fr. Ben Urmston

Excerpts from his website: <http://www.xavier.edu/frben/>

Peace with the Earth    Do we want to do our part to take care of the Earth?  We can't write without a pencil or send an e-mail without a computer. Each of the**five pillars of a Vision of Hope working together like the fingers on our hands can help us to take adequate care of our earth.**

**1.Stewardship of our common planet is certainly part of a global ethic.** How can we love our neighbor if we poison the one home on which all of us live?  **We need greater and deeper inner spiritual freedom to keep our eyes wide open when what we see is inconvenient, even appalling**. We need to read, study, meditate, pray. We need an inner attitude of care of the earth and all living beings.  **We need love of our one common human family.  I think it’s a mistake to** divide our world into allies and enemies.

**AN AFFIRMATION OF HUMAN ONENESS  I am a member of the human family, a citizen of the world. The achievements of men and women throughout the ages are my heritage. My destiny is bound to that of all my fellow human beings.  What we jointly create forms our bequest to future generations. May my life serve the good of my family. May our use of the earth preserve it for those yet to come.  (Composed by Dr. Joseph Schwartzberg)**

 <http://healingearth.ijep.net/> Brings together people from around the world to engage in an integral approach to study of our earth in an ethical and spiritual way.   I recommend this.  Can be used as a textbook for graduate study and adults.

**2. Methods of non-violence could help us to insure laws that would protect our environment. Non-violence could help us to listen compassionately, communicate in a civil, loving way.**

**3.  A healthy environment is a natural economic right that should be second nature to us and eventually part of our legal and constitutional structures.**

**4. Economic Democracy would give all of us more say about care of the earth. Although there are corporations moving in the right direction, we need to change the bottom line and charters of corporations, make corporations more accountable to citizens**. If the economy is causing deterioration of the earth, we need to change our economic structures.  Is a**"job" that is harmful to the earth really a job?   Cooperatives, local worker ownership are better for the environment.   Our corporations should be directed toward production in accord with *Cradle to Cradle,*with products created in ways in which what is produced can be used again, recycled.**

From policy statement on just transition from fossil fuel to renewable energy.  It's not easy, but a necessary challenge.    <https://www.stanleyfoundation.org/publications/pab/RosembergPABStrengtheningJustTransition417.pdf>

Denmark’s Wind Sector12 Starting in the 1970s, Danish social dialogue produced a strong industrial and climate policy aimed first at energy independence and later at transitioning the power sector from coal to wind. Over time, Denmark became a net energy exporter, decreased coal use by 50 percent, and increased the share of wind in its power sector to 40 to 50 percent. It also produced a globally competitive wind industry that includes publicly traded Vestas, the world’s second largest wind turbine manufacturer, and Dong Energy, which is majority state owned and develops and operates wind and other energy projects. In 2015, Denmark’s wind industry employed 31,251 people, and wind power delivered 42 percent of Denmark’s electricity. If most discussions on just transition focus on phasing out a sector, closing a plant, or restructuring, it is critical to focus on generating new jobs and creating new sectors, as has been done in Denmark. The experience of Danish workers with green policies has been positive and thus created a new constituency of enthusiastic supporters of climate action.

**“Chicago Loyola U. students use the waste vegetable oil from cafeteria deep fat fryers and convert it into biodiesel which replaces petroleum diesel in campus shuttle buses.  It’s a waste-to-energy innovation that has measurable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, waste, and fossil fuel use.  As the project grew a by-product from the biodiesel reaction, glycerin, began to accumulate in 55 gallon drums in the lab.  The students were determined not to send these barrels to the landfill.  So they worked with a chemistry professor to make the waste glycerin into soap.  Today Loyola BioSoap has been refined through multiple chemistry trials and is now sold to Loyola’s housekeeping contractor and distributed to restroom hand soap dispensers across campus.”  (*Conversations On Jesuit Higher Education,*Fall 2016, p. 12)**

**“It is both hopeful and exciting to see the creative environmental sustainability programs that Jesuit colleges, universities, and high schools across the country are increasingly facilitating.  We can be most effective at this common goal if we share ideas and work together.  Father General Adolfo Nicolas, S.J. challenges us to leverage the capacity of the world’s largest higher education network (nearly 175 Jesuits colleges and universities worldwide) to more effectively address environmental and justice issues”. (Ibid. pp. 12-13)**

**In the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy workers and communities like Appalachia are “between a rock and a coal mine.”**Such transition needs to be made smoothly and with care for all.

**5.  A democratic World Authority could give us a common global policy, ways of enforcing global laws on global climate change, preserving arable land and potable water, controlling acid rain, bio-engineered seed, and addressing other crucial environmental issues like establishing a global commons**.   (See Laudato Si  No. 175)

From Healing Earth text-book mentioned above, Chapter on Global Climate Change: “Ethicist Stephen Gardiner calls global climate change a “perfect moral storm” because it intersects several highly complex ethical problems.[(Steve is the author of A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change (Oxford, 2011)](http://healingearth.ijep.net/climate/global-climate-change-and-ethics%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnote1_c3iunox) First, climate change **is a global problem in a world without an international political authority fully capable of managing it.** The United Nations is a highly valuable institution, but it does not--in itself-- possess sufficient power to effectively enforce its planetary policy on CO2emissions (see the [Kyoto Protocol](http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/items/2830.php)). **The global political system remains a group of 195 independent nation states, each rationally driven to secure their own self-interest, and thereby often engaging in actions contrary to the best interests of the world as a whole.”  War, violence, and the environment would be an important  part of such a picture.  Structures of just peace need to be created.**