

THE LAND



Statements and actions of The American Lutheran Church (1978 to 1982) dealing with the land and those who tend it

- "The Land: God's Giving, Our Caring" (study document on the theology of the land)
- "Policy for Management and Sale of Farmland by the ALC"
- "Concern for the Family Farm"

THE LAND: GOD'S GIVING, OUR CARING a study document on the theology of the land

Adopted Sept. 10, 1982, by the Eleventh General Convention of The American Lutheran Church as a statement of comment and counsel (GC82.10.97), expressing the views of the convention to the member congregations of The ALC and their members for their own consideration and such action as they deem appropriate.

Ballot vote tally: Yes 794; No 99.

A quiet crisis haunts our planet. The crisis is global, but it takes particular shape in the United States. It is a crisis of the land, and it has three chief expressions.

- **CONSERVATION.** *Survival of the land itself as the placenta for life.* Concerns over maintaining soil and water quality.
- **COMPETITION.** *Survival of all who live from the land.* Concerns over preserving the most appropriate uses of land for sustaining all living things.
- **CONCENTRATION.** *Survival on the land of those who tend it.* Concerns over dispersion of land ownership and control.

Survival is not too strong a word, even though many of us have only recently become aware of our society's land problems. This statement seeks to expand that awareness among church members.

Concern for the land is not a new concern among us. God's people have always lived with a strong sense of the land. The biblical people have known for centuries that the land is central to God's covenant with them, central to the shaping of human community, central to relationships of justice among all peoples who dwell on the earth.

The American Lutheran Church (ALC) has been especially conscious of the God-land-humanity connections because we are a church family with deep roots in the land of the North American continent. What have we learned from our experience with the land? And what have we to offer American society as it struggles with land/people issues in our time? This document aims to address both questions.

I. What Do We Mean by "Theology of the Land"?

Land is understood to be the created earth, given by God for sustenance of all life. It includes soil, air, and water for producing food. It also includes the land as supplier of resources such as fuels and lumber and metals, the land as base for human settlement and transport, the land as playground and renewer of spirit through *re*-creation.

A *theology of the land* is a way of thinking about the land-people relationship which has God at the center. It puts the focus on the experience of the people of God with the land, under God. It relies on both the biblical witness concerning the land as gift and trust and on the experience of biblical people to this day.

A land theology must result in a land *ethic*, that is, a way of behaving that is consistent with our believing, actions suited to our faith commitments about the land, God, and people. To speak of a land ethic means that concerns about the land are more than economic and political. Our relationship to the land is also a *moral* matter, a question of what is just and good and most likely to convey love to our neighbor.

II. What Do We Learn from the History of God's People?

The heart of biblical teaching about the land comes to us through the Hebrew Scriptures. Jesus and the New Testament writers assume and build upon that teaching. The biblical theology of the land combines poetic vision about what God wills with tough talk about community-destroying injustices which the people often fall into.

There are two primary themes in biblical teaching about land, under which all land considerations may be gathered. First, the land is a gift from God. Second, that gift is to be received and cared for as a trust.

A. Land as Gift

1. Land is a demonstration of grace. It is a part of God's good creation, but is not of our doing, not of our deserving. It is one of the vessels through which God sustains us.

Creation in general is given to the care of humankind in general. "Dominion" is not lordship over the rest of nature in any conquering sense, but living in harmony with, caring for the earth in responsibility before God. We are lovingly, gently to "till and keep" the land (Gen. 2:15).

3. The land is good but it is not itself sacred. It is not worthy of worship, which is reserved for God alone. But it has a "derived dignity" (Gabriel Fackre) because it is a good creation of the Giver. It is worthy of respect.

4. There is a close link between land and humanity, between *soil* and living *soul*. In Hebrew, *adamah* (arable land) and *adam* (humankind) have the same root; the word *dam* or life-blood is in both. We are formed from the dust of the earth and to it we return. We are both made in the non-material image of God and rooted in the earthy, material stuff of nature (Gen. 2:7; Eccles. 3:20).

5. Christ, the Second Adam, the eternal Word made flesh, is dust from this earth, as we are, and that reminds us of Christ's kinship with us. In the Eucharist, the Second Adam's body and blood are communicated to us via produce from that same earth, the farm products of grain and grape.

6. After the Fall a specific land is given as divine promise to a specific fallen people. This land is the context of the Covenant and God continues to care for it (Deut. 11:12). A landless people is invited to become landed and free (Deut. 6:20-23). This land is a safe place to dwell (Lev. 26:5-6). It is a place to grow and mine things needed for life (Deut. 8:7-10, Amos 9:13-15). It is a place to enjoy good things (Exod. 3:8, Eccles. 6:3).

B. Land as Trust

1. The gift of land does not confer ownership. The people are free to use and enjoy and benefit from the land, but not to possess it. God retains ownership (Ps. 24:1; Lev. 25:23). Humankind serves as God's caretakers on the land, God's stewards of what remains God's. We are given the land conditionally, in a sort of tenancy. We have use rights only—but that's enough.

2. As humankind cares for the land, the land takes care of humankind. How are we to take care of the land? We are to use it gratefully (Deut.

8:10). We are to be neighborly with the land—and “neighbors” includes nearby landholders, sojourners and exiles, those who are poor and landless, those who are returned to the earth in death, and those yet unborn. Good earth care preserves the source, practices sustainability (Deut. 22:6-7).

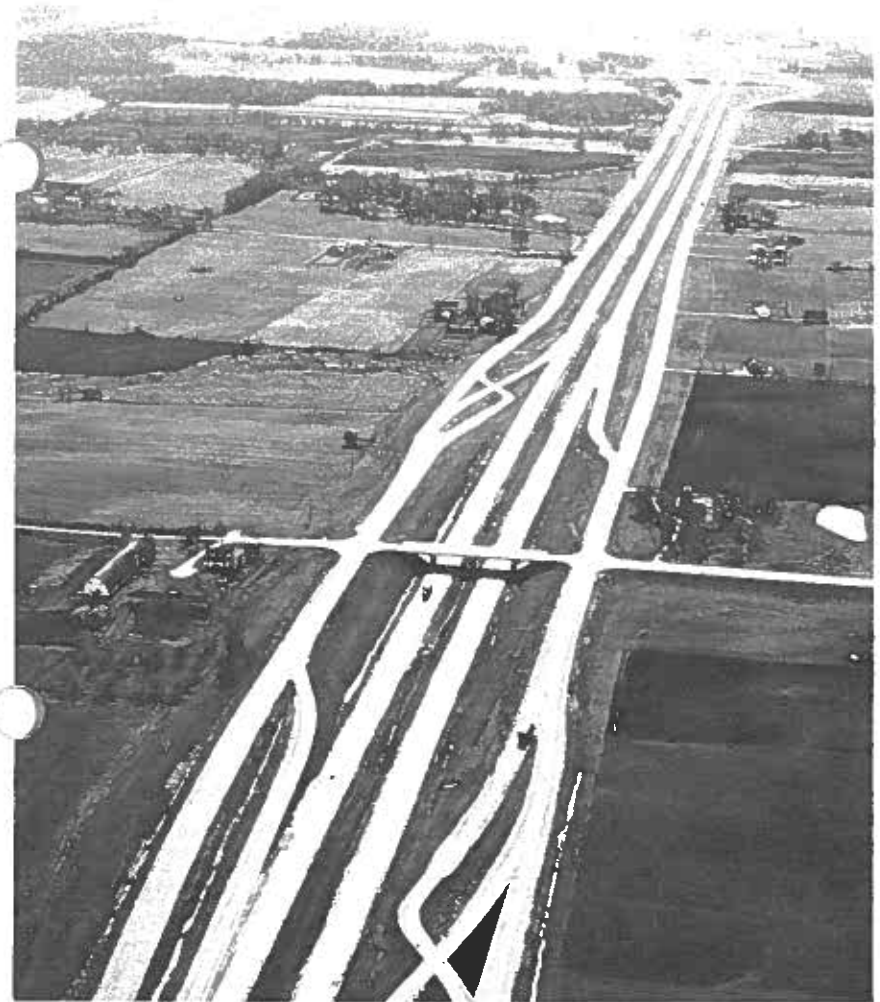
3. There are limits on private property rights. But some form of private responsibility seems needed if the public good, the well-being of all, is to be met (Lev. 25:13).

4. Land is given to meet human needs, but it also becomes an arena for human greeds. The desire to control more land is seductive. We wish to grasp land and become lord over it as though it were our own domain, rather than holding it tenderly and tentatively as the Lord's gift in trust. Land greed brings judgment (Isa. 5:8-9; 1 Kings 21). Injustice flows from the coveting of land (Mic. 2:1-5). The poor are especially vulnerable (Prov. 12:23) and in traditional societies the landless are usually poor.

5. The land tenure policy of Jubilee seeks to reduce excesses. The land is periodically rested. And every 50th year the land is returned to the heirs of those originally assigned to manage (Lev. 25). Jesus uses this Jubilee image of new beginnings as a sign of the New Age he brings (Luke 4:18-19 from Isa. 61:1-3).

6. Occupation of the land does *not* justify an ethic of greed and violence, or a pride of possession (Deut. 8:17). The biblical story is no divine sanction for believers to seize land, and native Americans, Black South Africans, and Palestinians have a right to cry for justice when land-takers misquote the Hebrew Bible. The covenant people are called to a new way of land care and land tenure, which includes living in peace and justice with neighbors.

7. The themes of land as gift and land as trust come to us not only from the Hebrew Scriptures. Among the clearest of similar perspectives is that which shapes the traditional cultures of the Indian Americans. It has striking parallels to the biblical witness in emphasizing (a) land as gift of a gracious Creator, (b) land as placenta for all life, (c) land-related needs of the group met through communitarian (not private) control of land, (d) sustainability and renewability at the center of human uses land. Indeed, it seems undeniable that the Native American attitude toward land exemplifies Saint Paul's statement that God has written into the hearts of *all* human beings a certain vision of order and justice (Rom. 2:15).



U.S. prime cropland lost annually to other uses: one million acres (photo by Wisconsin Natural Resources Dept.).

III. What Does Biblical Theology Say to Current Land Problems?

From the biblical witness on the land-people relationship, we can derive guidance for each of three clusters of land problems. Because The American Lutheran Church is particularly strong in this nation's agricultural heartland, special attention is given to ethical concerns related to farmland, which must be viewed as concerns also for our non-farm population and for the entire planetary community.

We are blessed in the United States with an efficient and productive system of agriculture. Farming members of The ALC are a significant part of that system and are especially sensitive to land issues currently facing our society. ALC farmers have been central to both the original call for and subsequent development of this document.

A. *We are to seek proper use and care of the land.*

1. All land uses are to be guided by the principle of sustainability or renewability. Neither the soil nor the water should be used in ways which use them up, or render them unhealthful. Food production, lumbering, industrial development, recreation—all must be practiced in ways which are sustainable for the long term. Each generation is to leave the land for the next in as good condition as it was received, preferably better.

2. Because the larger community has an interest in how the land is cared for, the larger community has a right to make and enforce certain rules of land care. Those who are entrusted with the care of the land, the property holders, have a right to expect the reward of a livelihood in exchange for their caretaking. The societal rules which govern their trusteeship of the land should be developed in close consultation with the landholders and should seek compliance through incentives.

3. In current U.S. agriculture, economic realities may push some farmers into practices which are not consistent with good soil and water conservation. Because farm commodity prices have stayed chronically depressed in relation to farm production costs and the general cost of living, some farmers believe they are economically pressured into cutting corners on conservation practices. Our society must see the link between a national cheap-food policy and the loss of topsoil and fresh water supplies. And nonfarmers must be willing to accept higher food costs so that the food producer may have a fair reward.

4. In areas of higher population density, it is essential to maintain an environment with green spaces, room for recreation, clean air and water, habitats for wildlife, and provision for urban trees.

We are to seek land uses that are appropriate to land types.

1. It is reasonable that prime farm land be saved for producing food, not used for shopping malls or highways or church buildings. It is reasonable that flood plains and unstable hillsides be used for scenery or wildlife, not for dwellings. Yet our society continues to do unreasonable things in the area of land use. We seem unable to restrain ourselves without laws and unwilling to undertake serious land-use planning and zoning. One result is that the U.S. currently loses to other uses, each year, one million acres of prime cropland.

2. No community in America, rural or urban, can afford to be without a land-use plan. Broad guidelines may be developed at the state level, but planning should be done at the most local level that is suitable. Next, communities will need to have the necessary implementing legislation and the courage to enforce such laws.

The protection of farmland and of farmers requires special attention. Various means are being tried, including (a) tax incentives to farmers, (b) local governments paying farmers for the development rights to their land and letting them continue to farm, (c) local zoning that forbids building on the most fertile land, (d) making it attractive for farmers to donate their development rights to an environmental trust, assuring the land will be held for farming.

4. The protection of wetlands, coastal zones, and wilderness areas, especially in the face of energy development pressures, is a critical need.

C. *We are to seek dispersed ownership/control of land.*

1. Increased concentration in control of farmland creates certain problems for our society. It hinders the entry into agriculture by new families. It threatens the family-farm structure of U.S. agriculture. It erodes rural communities and all rural institutions (schools, businesses, health care, churches) through population decline. The reasons that farms continue to grow bigger and farmers continue to grow fewer are complex, but some



Woe to those who . . .
 join field to field
 until . . . they are the sole
 inhabitants of the land.
 Isaiah 5:8.

of the causes are tied to public policies, policies which we have created and which we can change.¹

2. Among the public policies which have been identified as contributing to concentration in American agriculture are:

- credit policies which attract off-farm investors through subsidized interest rates, helping to bid up land prices so that smaller operators cannot compete;
- tax policies which reward bigness and farm expansion beyond the level of economic efficiency;²
- policies which maintain farm income by commodity support

1. "Family farm" may be defined as an agricultural production unit in which the management, economic risk, and most of the labor (peak seasons excepted) are provided by a given family and from which the family receives the bulk of its earnings. It is defined in terms of independent entrepreneurship, not acreage volume of production.

2. "Tax law encourages the growth and expansion of existing farms. Some of this growth comes at the expense of other farms; some at the cost of denying entry to persons who want to begin farming." *A Time to Choose*, Summary, Report on the Structure of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1981.

programs in which large farms receive most of the benefits, with the result that smaller farms are less competitive in the land market; and

- practices related to federally subsidized water which have encouraged land aggregation into larger and larger holdings.

3. A particular concern in the South is the major decline in land ownership among Black Americans. Black land ownership has dropped from 15.6 million acres in 1910 to less than 4 million acres in 1980. Efforts to aid Black people in retaining or reacquiring farmland are coordinated by such groups as the Emergency Land Fund and are deserving of support.

IV. What Actions Can We Take?

These are some of the steps we can take, as individual citizens and as organized expressions of the church.

A. As individuals . . .

1. We can seek to be as informed as possible on land issues in our own

communities *and* at national and global levels, and help to provide information and education to others. (See resource list, page 12.)

2. We can seek to change our society's care-less behavior concerning land, beginning with deliberate efforts to change ourselves by such actions as:

- a) challenging all proposals for inappropriate uses of land in our communities (e.g., to take prime farmland for any other purpose);
- b) opposing the patterns of the throwaway culture, by practicing voluntary recycling of resources and by promoting community incentives for resource recovery; and
- c) using any land we manage in ways that are consistent with the principles of conservation, appropriate use, and dispersed control.

3. Seek to generate support for public policies which will:

- a) develop land-use plans and the tools necessary to implement them;
- b) provide incentives to landowners (especially farmers) to practice conservation methods that sustain topsoil and fresh water supplies;
- c) help to permit economic survival of small and moderate-sized farm operations and help to diminish existing policies which contribute to concentration in farmland control;
- d) guard against dumping of hazardous waste; and
- e) encourage the best possible disposal of chemicals and nuclear waste.

B. As church organizations . . .

1. We can be aware that "the church is more than an innocent bystander. It has the obligation to be a good steward of whatever lands it owns and a good neighbor to those whose land it borders. . . . It sees local issues in a biblical, global perspective that relates the local community to the world as a whole. It questions standards which worship material success, exploit resources, debase persons, encourage self-centeredness, or deny claims to justice and equity. It broadens perspective on issues through its worship and training ministries. It motivates its members to speak and to act as God's people at work in the world. It rejects the temptation to give dogmatic answers to the world's questions . . . ("Land Use Policies—a Christian Perspective," analysis by the standing committee, ALC Office of Research and Analysis, October 1976).

2. We can actively communicate to policy makers at all levels those

positions which the church holds up for special attention. These positions include:³

- a) support for a dispersed ownership of farmland and for the continued health of the family-farm structure;
- b) support for economic policies which permit a fair return to those who tend the land;
- c) support for land-use planning which seeks to assure the most appropriate uses of all lands; and
- d) support for policies which seek sustainability and renewability in all uses of land—farming, mining, timbering, recreational.

3. We can behave as land-holder in ways consistent with the biblical values and the social-policy objectives of the church, including *sustainability* of the land, *appropriate uses* of the land, and *dispersed control* of the land. The following considerations are linked to such behavior by the church:

- a) Congregations have a prime function in worship and education related to land concerns. All congregations, urban or rural, should consider regular emphasis on land ethics, such as observance of soil stewardship week or the ancient practice of Rogation days each spring.
- b) Congregations should weigh carefully the impact on community land use of such practices as their generation of solid waste, provision of parking space, and use of excess or idle lands.
- c) Members of congregations in farming areas are encouraged to pool resources for financial help to enable new farming families to enter agriculture.
- d) When starting new congregations or relocating existing churches, The ALC should be mindful of the principle of appropriate uses of land. Thus, it should avoid acquiring parcels that are better suited to farming, wildlife habitat, or environmental-protection uses.
- e) When disposing of lands received as bequests, all church institutions and entities should weigh such questions as a sale's impact on dispersal vs. concentration in land control and its impact on land stewardship. Sellers can explore such measures as (1) breaking large parcels into smaller to allow access to buyers with limited resources; (2) using negotiated sale approaches; (3) using certificates of intent by which potential buyers accept the seller's

3. See "Rural Economic Problems," a statement adopted by the 1970 ALC General Convention, and (*below in this pamphlet*) "Concern for the Family Farm," two resolutions adopted by the 1978 ALC General Convention and reaffirmed by the 1980 General Convention.

desire that the land is to be used by an owner-operator farming family and according to accepted land stewardship practices.⁴

- f) Church members who wish to bequeath farms to church organizations may write into wills similar statements of intent concerning land dispersal and land stewardship.
- g) The church's camps and outdoor ministries have a special role in (1) modeling proper earth-care in the varieties of lands they manage; (2) educating others, from both church and larger community, in stewardship of the creation.

V. Some Key Resources

A. Organizations

AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST, 1717 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. National organization "created to support or help initiate local preservation organizations engaged in safeguarding agricultural properties."

CENTER FOR RURAL AFFAIRS, Box 405, Walthill, NE 68067. Nonprofit organization devoted to strengthening rural communities and smaller farms. Special concern with research and advocacy concerning impact on farm concentration of public policies.

EMERGENCY LAND FUND, 836 Beecher St. S.W., Atlanta, GA 30310. Seeks to prevent loss of land by small farmers, particularly Blacks in the South. Legal services, financial assistance, tax help.

INTERRELIGIOUS TASKFORCE ON U.S. FOOD POLICY, 110 Maryland Ave. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002. Agricultural Policy Work Group has special concern for federal policies related to family farming and farmlands. "Tax Breaks: Writing Off Family Farms" (1982) is publication analyzing effect on farmland concentration of federal tax law.

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 14th Street and Independence Ave. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250. Helps land owners and operators to apply conservation practices to soil and water resources. State departments for soil conservation and county conservation districts should be consulted also.

B. Publications

Disappearing Farmlands, a guide to agricultural land preservation, August 1980, available from National Association of Counties Research Foundation, 1735 New York Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Pamphlet, 18 pages.

The Earth Is the Lord's: Essays on Stewardship, ed. by Mary Evelyn Jegen, Paulist Press, 1978. Book of theologically oriented essays on Christian concern for creation, 216 pages.

4. A detailed policy for guiding sale of farmland according to such concerns has been developed by the ALC Board of Trustees; it appears below in this pamphlet.

Farming the Lord's Land, ed. by Charles P. Lutz, Augsburg Publishing House, 1980. Book of 10 essays on issues in public dialogue concerning land control, conservation, farm size, 208 pages.

Farmland or Wasteland: A Time to Choose, by R. Neil Sampson, Rodale Press, 1981. A treatment of the loss of farmlands through both erosion and non-farm uses by the executive vice-president of the National Association of Conservation Districts. Calls for major change in public policies, 422 pages.

A Good Land, five-session biblical study on the land and those who care for it, by James Limburg, Augsburg Publishing House, 426 S. Fifth St., Minneapolis, MN 55415. Booklet, 24 pages.

The Land, by Walter Brueggemann, Fortress Press, 1977. Study of ancient Israel's relationship to the land of the covenant. Illumines many crucial land issues of our time. Book, 196 pages.

National Agricultural Lands Study Final Report. Order from National Agricultural Lands Study, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. 88 pages.

Strangers and Guests: Toward Community in the Heartland. Study statement on land and rural justice from the Roman Catholic bishops of 12 Midwest states. Single copies free from diocesan rural life office or bishop. Or write Heartland Project, 220 S. Prairie Ave., Sioux Falls, S.D. 57104. Pamphlet, 37 pages.

The Unsettling of America, by Wendell Berry, Avon, 1978. A poetic and prophetic statement linking the retention of families in farming with environmental concern and an ethic for land policy in the United States. Book, 228 pages.

Water: More Precious Than Oil, five-session course on importance of our management of water and its sacramental significance for life on this planet, by Jack Nelson. Augsburg Publishing House, 426 S. Fifth St., Minneapolis, MN 55415. Booklet, 24 pages.

C. Audiovisuals

The Crisis of Yankee Agriculture. Film, 28 minutes, color (1979). Examines problems of small farmers trying to survive near heavily populated areas. Also points to hazards of depending on food shipped long distances in the future. \$35 rental, Cambridge Media Resources, 36 Shepart St., Cambridge, MA 02138.

Farming with Nature. Film, 35 minutes, color (1977). Story of rejuvenation of worn-out soil in Missouri by one family's efforts over two generations. Churchill Films, 662 N. Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90069.

The Gift of Land. Series of five filmstrips (1981), dealing with the land and God's covenant, conservation of earth resources and future sustainability of the planet's life systems. Prepared in consultation with Dr. Dean Freudenberger, agronomist-theologian. Franciscan Communications, 1229 S. Santee St., Los Angeles, CA 90015.

POLICY ON FARM LAND MANAGEMENT AND SALE

Adopted by the Board of Trustees, The American Lutheran Church, April 1982, and approved by the ALC Church Council, May 1982 (action CC82.5.160).

Whenever farm land is entrusted to The American Lutheran Church gift or bequest, the Board of Trustees will care for the property as good and faithful stewards of the earth and will sell the property as soon as possible in a manner which:

- seeks the fair market value of the property, so that the full amount of the gift can be used in the mission of the church in accord with the donor's wishes; and
- demonstrates a continuing concern for the stewardship of the land and for the people who live and work on it.

In order to accomplish this policy objective, the following guidelines will be considered:

1. The local ALC congregation(s) should be made aware of our policies and should be informed of any plans for the management or sale of the property. We will seek their input concerning special circumstances or conditions in the area which may affect how we manage or sell the property. We will also solicit their recommendations for the use of local agents (i.e., appraisers, attorneys, realtors, auctioneers).
2. If the terms of the gift or bequest make it necessary to retain the property for an extended period, we will endeavor to follow the soil and water conservation practices recommended by the district office of the Soil Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.
3. Until the property is sold, we will rent to a tenant recognized in the community as a good farmer who shares our concern for the stewardship of the land.
4. Prior to the sale of the property, we will obtain two independent appraisals. If the appraised values differ significantly, a third appraisal may be warranted.
5. If the size of the property is such that it can be farmed efficiently in smaller units, we will consider offering the property for sale as separate parcels in order to provide greater possibility of purchase to beginning or smaller farm operators.
6. The most appropriate method of sale will be determined by individual circumstance and local tradition. The following are possibilities:
 - a) *Negotiated sale.* This may be the preferred method when a farmer has been identified who is willing to pay the fair market value as determined by the appraisals.

- b) *Sealed bids.* The three or four highest bidders will normally be given the opportunity to raise their bids after the opening. The right to reject all bids will be retained.
 - c) *Public auction.* The right to reject all bids will be retained.
 - d) *Realtor listing.* The list price should be at least as high as the average of the appraisals plus all selling costs.
7. If the property has been farmed by a tenant, the tenant may be given the opportunity to purchase at least a portion of the property at the fair market value as determined by the appraisals. (This may be especially appropriate when the tenant lives on the property or when the property is all or the major portion of the acreage farmed by the tenant.)
 8. All sales of farm land will be conditional on the purchaser signing a certificate warranting that:
 - a) purchaser is purchasing for own use as owner/operator;
 - b) purchaser has no present intent to sell or dispose of property;
 - c) purchaser shall care for property as a prudent steward following practices consistent with sound soil and water conservation as recommended by the district office of the Soil Conservation Service.
 9. Terms of sale will normally be cash when Federal Land Bank funds or other loan programs are available to farmers in the area. However, when necessary, land can be sold on contract for deed. Contract terms will require a minimum down payment of 20%, have a term no longer than 10 years but a principal amortization of up to 25 years, be at an interest rate at least comparable to other land contract rates in that area, and call for payments no less frequently than annually.
 10. In areas where there are known mineral values, all mineral rights will normally be reserved. (This will keep the farm land values from being inflated by mineral values.) In areas where there are no known mineral values, at least 50% of the mineral rights will normally be reserved.

All the above guidelines are conditional upon specific terms of a bequest or gift agreement.

CONCERN FOR THE FAMILY FARM

Two resolutions adopted by the Ninth General Convention of The American Lutheran Church in 1978 (GC78.24.168, GC78.24.172) were reaffirmed by the Tenth General Convention in 1980 (GC80.6.95).

Fair Public Policies (GC78.24.168)

Whereas, The American Lutheran Church believes that the family farm system is the keystone of American agriculture, of the stewardship of

productive land and water resources, and of a healthy rural America; and

Whereas, the continued viability of the family farm system is dependent on agricultural trade, conservation and environmental, land ownership and land use, taxation, and other policies of federal, state, and local governments; therefore be it

Resolved, that The American Lutheran Church express its conviction that a strong and viable family farm sys-

tem is crucial to the quality of American life and its contribution toward easing world hunger; and be it further

Resolved, that The American Lutheran Church hereby underscores the urgency of federal, state, and local governments developing fair and equitable policies which will preserve and protect the family farm system and the strength and stability of the towns and villages of rural America.

Absentee Ownership of Farmland (GC78.24.172)

Whereas, farm land frequently is purchased for investment or speculative or tax write-off purposes apart from agricultural productivity; and

Whereas, such farm land purchase typically brings about the indifference and neglect of community well-being generally characteristic of absentee ownership; therefore be it

Resolved, that The American Lutheran Church use its influence to impress upon those individuals and corporate bodies who acquire farm land for investment, speculative, tax write-off, or other purposes apart

from agricultural productivity the urgency of considering the effects on quality of community life and the ecological impact their actions may generate; and be it further

Resolved, that we as church people exercise our civil right to influence Congress by writing personal letters to our legislators on this issue; and be it further

Resolved, that this resolution be shared with the members of The ALC through *The Lutheran Standard*.

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