STEWARDSHIP GARDENING:
MULTIFARIOUS MEANINGS THROUGH COMMUNITY, ECOLOGY, AND FOOD

BY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Faith-based organizations throughout the United States are creating gardens with a variety of visions and results. Ten such gardens were present in Champaign and Urbana, IL in 2010. This phenomenon of faith-based gardening is designated as stewardship gardening within this thesis. While these gardens are recently conspicuous, they are certainly not new; disparate connotations of environmental stewardship have developed since the Garden of Eden. The contemporary call for environmental stewardship should acknowledge its historical implications with consideration of the boundaries between ecocentric and anthropocentric worldviews.

This thesis considers the design and implementation of Good Ground Garden of First Presbyterian in Champaign, Illinois to understand the motives of stewardship gardening and the capacity that lies within. Eleven gardeners were asked a series of questions in an open, colloquial format about spirituality, stewardship, and environmental ethics in relation to gardening. From these interviews, themes of situation, human ecology, spirituality, reflection, interaction, practice, food, stewardship, conviction, and purpose emerge as part of the greater story of religion and ecology. Historical background, analysis of local stewardship gardens, and these personal interviews help identify what is valued in the stewardship garden. These values are synthesized into different garden types - Community, Environmental, Cultivation, and Permaculture - with varying forms and functions. This thesis concludes by demonstrating how each garden type belongs to a cohesive stewardship gardening movement. The common denominator of stewardship gardens, sacredness in the landscape, is explored through an understanding of its components - Centeredness, Natural Boundary, Connectedness, and Particularness - as suggested by Landscape Architect, Randolph Hester. The aspect of particularness is expanded on as an opportunity for a visual marker in the landscape. A combination of garden types with a renewed historical perspective is necessary for a stewardship gardening movement within the realm of urban agriculture, religion, and ecology.
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“The significance – and ultimately the quality – of the work we do is determined by our understanding of the story in which we are taking part” (Berry 2003, 315).

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

A growing number of religious organizations throughout the nation have community gardens. Typically, a church will have a small vegetable garden with volunteers donating the produce. This effort, which can be broadly defined as stewardship gardening¹, aligns with many of the goals associated with community gardens. As discussed in later sections, the benefits associated with community gardening include community capacity building, environmental health, and food security for those involved with the garden. In the context of urban agriculture and local foods, what are the significant aspects of a stewardship garden and how can they be integrated to better serve the greater community with lasting appeal?

The form and function of these gardens can be informed by historical and contemporary stewardship gardening paradigms along with gardeners’ relations to religion and ecology. Currently, there is a disconnect between historical and present values of religion and ecology, and their subsequent actions. Yet, religious organizations have leverage in determining the garden’s purpose because it is not need-based. They can decide what the ideal garden is with regards to producing food, enhancing the natural environment, and building a sense of community. These are three diverging values of stewardship, though they are not mutually exclusive. For instance, a garden that solely protects the environment doesn’t grow food or necessarily serve as a gathering spot, but it provides habitat for wildlife. Once these values are identified, varying garden types corresponding with each value set - community, ecology, and food - are realized with the ultimate goal of defining stewardship gardening as a coherent movement.

1.1 SCIENTIA - WHAT EXISTS

First, one must understand the present situation of stewardship gardens and their general significance. Gardens have existed since the dawn of humankind. They span from the Garden of Eden to contemporary stewardship gardens. Inferred from the story of the fall of humans from

¹ Washington State University Extension defines this term (http://gardening.wsu.edu/stewardship/stewgard.htm), but this research approaches it within a religious context as stewardship is an ambiguous, but common term used by many religious organizations.
Eden, there are two primary understandings of human’s relation to nature. One view states that nature exists for humans to exploit with granted dominion, an anthropocentric interpretation. The other perceives a nonhierarchical relationship with nature, an ecocentric perspective. Both are important as they explain our actions in the attempt to find a way back to Eden.

There is a diverse array of stewardship gardens currently. Some include a commons plot worked by all. They come in all sizes and plot arrangements with conventional and experimental practices. The sole element that connects each garden is a sense of stewardship. Yet, environmental stewardship, praised by nearly all religious organizations, has differing connotations as will be demonstrated. While stewardship brings these gardens together, it also obscures their significance and drives them apart through its varying interpretations.

This thesis assumes that gardens constructed through religion have an element of sacredness as their commonality. Any garden can be sacred, but in this case these religious gardens are all sacred in one way or another. One facet of the sacred is spirituality, which is about doing, the action form of sacred. The most common derivative of spirituality in the context of gardening is stewardship. The idea of stewardship is convoluted with infinite meaning through history. Stewardship gardens, through this research, will be defined.

Regardless of an organization’s or individual’s stance, these gardens potentially hold greater significance for a community. They are ideal community gardens. Many churches own the land for potential gardens, without concerns about zoning, soil contamination, and accessibility. Stewardship gardens are emerging because of their accessibility to gardening resources.

1.2 ETHICS - WHAT THIS MEANS

My involvement in the Good Ground Garden in the summer of 2010 guides and informs the development of this thesis. First Presbyterian Church’s Good Ground Garden, located in Southwest Champaign, is an example of a stewardship garden. The initial planning stages, seasonality, and the outcomes of the garden are discussed. Interviews with Good Ground gardeners express varying affinities to gardening. The findings from both the gardening season and the sentiments of gardeners inform the stewardship gardening guide, which essentially is a condensed version of this thesis and may be found in Appendix D. A reflection and analysis
succeeds these findings and, with respect to the guide, proposes how the gardening process may have been different the first year and what can still be improved the next season.

Next, an envisioning and weighing of alternative possibilities is essential in order to understand what ought to be. This is about the process of gardening and how actions are informed by meaning and experience. With these, an ethical sense is developed with regards to religion and ecology, the sacred and profane, faith and reason, ecocentric and anthropocentric, etc. As religion is easy to conceal oneself in without articulation, the stewardship gardening guide unearths these contradictory forces in hopes of revealing dialectical relationships.

1.3 PRAXIS - WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE

Last, a synthesizing of gardening methods and rationales leads to the development of typologies. Typologies are useful in highlighting alternatives, but should not be strictly followed. The different garden forms can be grouped into four different types: The Environmental Garden, the Community Garden, the Cultivation Garden, and the Permaculture Garden. No two gardens will be alike as they all are conditioned to the specific socioeconomic, environmental, and cultural aspects of a site.

A reexamination of the sacred garden is necessary to unite the varying garden forms into a single stewardship gardening movement. Hence, this gardening process returns to its starting point with a deeper significance than before. To achieve design gestalt the following components of a sacred garden are necessary: Connectedness, Natural Boundary, Centeredness, and Particularness (Hester 2006, 127-133). This last feature symbolizes the movement through a single artifact, which also allows local identity through its impressionability. By giving agency to stewardship, the sacred can have greater meaning and enable future action in the local foods system.

All gardens are embedded with meaning, but only those that are aware of its significance know how to utilize the garden for the greatest good. As anything sacred overflows with meaning, an inherent characteristic is the ability to enable agency. While this research is limited by a Western perspective, all sacred gardens have this enabling capacity. The only difference is the context in which they’re situated. The guide and research are meant to reconnect religions and gardeners to the sacred garden’s aptitude for action. This research allows one to analyze
gardening goals by fitting them into an ongoing historical context, understanding what these goals might mean to the greater community, and realizing how they are made manifest.
CHAPTER 2: THE FAITH BASED GARDENING MOVEMENT

This chapter explores the roots of stewardship gardening in the context of religion and ecology. This is an overly broad scope, but key actors are selectively highlighted to show shifts in perspective from ecocentric to anthropocentric in early history. These views about the appropriate relationship between humans and nature are expressed in written and actual attempts at utopia. A look at more recent history demonstrates renewed acceptance of ecocentrism, but dominant anthropocentric practice still exists and is prevalent today. What stance will stewardship gardens take in response to the call for environmental action?

2.1 HISTORY (THE BEGINNING – 17TH CENTURY)

The thought and involvement regarding the appropriate level of interaction with nature, specifically gardening or vegetable gardening, is nothing new. This can be traced, from a Western perspective, from the Garden of Eden to the present day plurality of Church gardens. Examples of religion and gardening speak to the broader story of religion and ecology. While the perspective in this section is Western, parallels are found within non-Western religions as well. The following context is essential to understanding religion’s idea of the garden and its potential.

The Garden of Eden is the prototype for the perfect garden. Since humankind’s fall from Eden, two conflicting messages about humans’ appropriate role with nature have emerged and evolved. One states that God provided nature for humans to use and exploit, that humans have dominion over nature. “…the dominant – although never the sole – theological tradition before the modern period was a strongly anthropocentric view of human dominion arising from a Greek derived understanding of nature imposed on the Biblical text” (Berry, 2006, 6). For instance, several parables speak to stewardship in that God saw humans as “…intended to use the resources to the master’s and its own best advantage, to make them grow” (Palmer 2006, 67). Nature is viewed solely as a resource to be exploited. Hence, the “Steward with responsibility to care for Creation … acting with delegated authority” (Berry 2006, 7). This sentiment is supported by the Calvinist notion in Christianity that one’s life on Earth is temporary, and that the second coming of the Messiah will save all from ruin. Thus, there is no reason to concern oneself with environmental degradation.
The other interpretation from Genesis takes an ecocentric perspective believing that humans have a nonhierarchical role with nature. This involves humans having a reciprocal role with their surroundings without one ruling over the other, recognizing that we are but one creature of the many created by God. This understanding isn’t explicit in the creation story alone, but continues with the notion of stewardship later in Genesis 3:14-25, in which, “God expects humans to give good care to creation and not waste or spoil the natural bounty” (Fick, 22). Also, as evidenced above, several parables demonstrate that stewardship involves a master, steward, and the master’s possessions (Palmer, 64). Anthropocentric views focus on the relationship between the master and the steward, while the ecocentrist asks what is most advantageous for both God, the master, and humans. If a pantheistic sense is employed, then clearly nature is to be cared for and respected through a sustainable use of its resources. If God is not viewed as a part of nature, then it is still reasonable to assume that God, the master, would want his possessions (i.e. nature) to be cared for upon return. A further understanding of stewardship is explored in Chapter 3.2. This perspective realizes that the resources nature provides are only one aspect of nature’s inherent value. “Within the sacred world everything possesses a spiritual essence, a soul, an order, and an intrinsic connection to the larger web of life” (Nollman 1994, 214). Both dissenting anthropocentric and ecocentric ideals are based around finding one’s way back to Eden through proper stewardship.

From the Middle Ages to the present, philosophers have written, spoken, and sometimes carried out through conceived utopias their ideas about the appropriate role of humans in nature. The first religious garden following Eden is that within the Benedictine Abbey (550-1550), where labor in the garden is considered “an act of prayer” (Dewitt and Prance 1992, 15). These gardens justified deforestation as a way to make space for the “restoration of earthly paradise” by employing geometric forms and primly trimmed shrubs (Dewitt and Prance 1992, 15). Initially, as Carolyn Merchant, leading Environmental Historian and Professor of Environmental History,
Philosophy, and Ethics at University of California, Berkeley, notes, “the recovery of Eden through its reinvention on Earth is premised on the transformation of wilderness into garden” (Merchant 2003, 59). Eden wasn’t a jumbled mess, but was viewed as controlled and orderly. These notions continue to guide action to the present.

Some years later, on the opposite end of the spectrum, emerged Saint Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals and the environment, one of the first to represent the far ecocentric side. “Francis considered all nature as the mirror of God and as so many steps to God. He called all creatures his “brothers” and “sisters,” and, in the most endearing stories about him, preached to the birds and persuaded a wolf to stop attacking the people of the town of Gubbio and their livestock if the townspeople agreed to feed the wolf” (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2011, s.v. “Saint Francis of Assisi”). Francis sets the precedent for future perspectives in the true ecocentric realm.

Though not the first true anthropocentrist, Francis Bacon, captured the sentiment of this worldview and influences the likes of others today. A product of the Renaissance, Bacon is described as the “Father of Modern Science,” such that he “de-sacralized nature,” and believed that scientific research was the only means “to restore humanity to the state that God had originally intended for it” (Berry, 2006, 6). Bacon’s beliefs are best captured in his utopian fiction New Atlantis. In description of the Atlantian civilization Bacon writes, “The end of our foundation is the knowledge of causes, and secret motions of things; and the enlarging of

Figure 2.2 New Atlantis
(http://www.santa-coloma.net/voynich_drebbel/new_atlantis/new_atlantis_engraving.jpg)
the bounds of human empire, to the effecting of all things possible” (Bacon 1937, 263). *New Atlantis* isn’t the first religious utopia, but Bacon’s is the first to clearly reveal the apparatus of a self sufficient city.

2.2 RELIGIOUS UTOPIAS

One of the earliest religious utopias published is *The City of God* (5th century) by Saint Augustine of Hippo. Unlike *New Atlantis*, it focuses on the inhabitants, their values, and the just workings of a society rather than the various components of a city, such as services provided, building types, and forms of employment. With specific references to Plato, *City of God* essentially “… takes Platonic distinction, and Christianizes it. Righteousness is lifted to a higher plane: it ceases to be a system of right relations between men … and becomes a system of right relations between man and God” (Barker 1973, xvi). This form of utopia is about the moral actions of humans and their values.

A similar utopian text to *New Atlantis*, and published just before, is *Christianopolis* (1619) by Johann Valentin Andreae. This is a much more exhaustive account of utopia, covering everything from night lights to Christian poverty. On gardens Andreae writes, “Around the college is a double row of gardens, one general and the other divided into plots corresponding to the homes of the citizens; both are fitted out with more than a thousand different sorts of vegetables in such a way they represent a living herbarium,” and, “… let us wonder at those who…neglect that which is the best of the earth, its use and beautiful decoration” (Andreae 1916, 268-269). In his utopia, Andreae combines the location and details of specific elements in a city along with its necessary moral values among citizens.

One of the first religious groups to realize a sense of utopia was the Diggers, organized by Gerard Winstanley in 1649. “During the English Civil War (1642-1649)...[they] emerged as the left wing of the Parliamentary forces” (Wall 2005, 482). The Diggers formed out of
political ideals, but Winstanley used religious text to support his philosophies (Wall 2005, 482). “Winstanley argued that the real Fall occurred not when Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden but when Cain and Abel fought over property” (Wall 2005, 482). The Diggers weren’t long-lived, but they did establish several communities. Today their campaign is referred to in various environmental movements.

A continuance of these religious utopias emerged in America from the Age of Enlightenment through the Second Great Awakening, and even remnants of this movement exist today. Each community strived for self-sufficiency with fundamental agrarian lifestyles. A few notable religious communities include the Women in the Wilderness Community, the Shakers, the Amana Colonies, and Koinonia Farm. This last example, despite its ups and downs, still exists today. Though, “it is not an intentional community in the sense of communal ownership of possessions,” like other religious utopias; “It is rather a loosely knit community of people with mutual interests” (Sutton 2003, 160). More significantly, Koinonia farms later became Koinonia Partners, which is the founding organization of Habitat for Humanity. Similarly, other religious communities are known for lasting inventions, such as Oneida and the lazy susan (Sutton 2003, 75). The ideals of these communities live on through their inventiveness and efforts for better livelihoods.

Spiritual utopias, or at least ideas of utopia, express a more explicit form of the believed ideal relationship of humans and nature. The fact that these early simulated utopias are based around land, work, and agriculture is significant because other modern utopists, such as Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright, largely neglected agricultural systems. “The failure of urban utopists to integrate agricultural practices into their schemes stemmed from their inability to grasp the significance of agriculture as a cultural and economic mode of production.
based on rationality, efficiency, high technological standards, specialization, and universality” (Alon-Mozes 2009, 167). Comparing modern utopias to spiritual communes, in many ways, is unfeasible. One is about finding the ideal through the act of communal living, whereas the other is about creating the ideal through design. Yet, the comparison is still relevant in that it highlights major differences between the planned, rational utopia to the real, sometimes unsystematic utopia, which includes the agricultural component. Many religious communities are short-lived, but they have a lasting impact on society and signify our human desire for better living.

2.3 HISTORY (18th – LATE 20th CENTURY)

While these American religious utopias were developing, a more ecocentric worldview became apparent, first with the philosophy of nature, then with the era of romanticism, and continuing with the American conservation movement. Jean Jacques Rousseau, Sam Coleridge, and Johann van Goethe contributed to the reversal of indigenous understanding revealing that, “Indigenous peoples and their religions were not primitive but noble” (Taylor 2005, xiii). Then came the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. With this movement, “the idea of the sublime as a religious experience became an important component of the European Enlightenment. Nature was now cathedral, temple, and Bible” (Merchant 2003, 84). Many of these sentiments exist today and some even influenced government organization. For instance, the National Park system, “founded significantly on perceptions of the sacredness of natural systems,” was established by John Muir, who also organized the Sierra Club (Taylor 2005, xi). Before these movements, the world held a primarily anthropocentric perspective.

Remarkably, this sentiment occurred around the same time of great scientific advance with Charles Darwin’s theories on evolution and Lynn White’s controversial The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis (1967). The effects of romanticism did influence anthropocentrism on some degree, softening the stance of complete human dominion. The sense became, “We are ‘above nature’ in the sense of being able to manipulate and effect it…but we are also part of it, dependent upon it for food and air, and energy – from both fossil and renewable sources” (Berry 2006, 7). Nevertheless, while ecocentrism was becoming more spiritual, in that nature itself might be considered religion, anthropocentrism was condemning religion. Charles
Darwin, for instance, “came to view religions as originating in misperceptions that natural forces were animated or alive” (Taylor 2005, xiii). Furthermore, Lynn White, Professor of Medieval History at the University of California, Los Angeles, caused much tumult when he ultimately blamed Christianity for introducing science and technology to the Western world as part of man’s dominion over nature, which eventually led to the environmental problems of today (White 1967, 1206). While White blames religion, he also concludes that, “… the remedy must also be essentially religious” (White 1967, 1207). Since then, religious organizations have responded with renewed concern for the environment. For instance, Pope John Paul II issued a call for ecosystem stewardship in his 1990 World Day of Peace message (Bakken et al. 1995, 3). The appropriate level of action, in relation to eco- and anthropo-centrism, is the quest of today as the formal response of stewardship has become convoluted with little meaning.

Several conclusions can be drawn from this evolution of thought on humans and nature within religion. It can be argued that the interest of stewardship gardens stems from a renewed interest in natural systems and that the act of creating the garden is a form of responding to the call to act in light of environmental rhetoric. Thus, the initial interest comes from a more ecocentric perspective, but the response is to act with delegated authority. Churches essentially create gardens to gain something from them, typically food for donations to food banks or missions. Through this historical interpretation, churches’ decisions about the garden’s role, ecocentric or anthropocentric or a mixture, are clearly laid out. Acknowledgement of the first and subsequent gardens, utopias, and thoughts regarding the human/nature interaction allow religions to respond not merely to White’s criticism or today’s commercial rhetoric of “Going Green,” but to their religious character as a whole. This type of mediation and action allows a much deeper level of understanding about where one’s beliefs come from and how they’re situated in history in order to build religious integrity.

Figure 2.5 Rural Life Committee of the North Carolina Council of Churches local foods guide (http://www.cometothetablenc.org/guide.pdf)
2.4 PRESENT-DAY GARDENS

2.4.1 NATIONWIDE

Stewardship gardening is a growing and powerful direction of community gardens in America as it involves peoples of differing ideologies and purposes for gardening. Churches throughout the United States are promoting locally grown food by supporting their own gardens. This type of community garden is enacted across scales and for different purposes. For instance, there is an Eco-Justice Program within the National Council of Churches of Christ (NCC) that offers several readings on how food, farming, and faith are interrelated (http://nccecojustice.org/). Also, the Rural Life Committee of the North Carolina Council of Churches has a booklet that informs churches about local foods (Hermann, Liu-Beers, and Beach). Not only churches, but religious communities have come to take interest in gardening. The Faith in Place organization in Chicago has initiated several gardening projects throughout the Champaign-Urbana area and is comprised of people of differing faiths. Food from these gardens serves various purposes within the community, such as donations for food banks, homeless shelters, or congregation members. This movement is encouraging since people are acting out of their commitment to faith as their underlying foundation for food production.

2.4.2 CHAMPAIGN-URBANA STEWARDSHIP GARDENS

There are ten stewardship gardens in Champaign-Urbana as of 2010. Each garden is unique not for the vegetables grown or for the level of commitment by the gardeners (they are all well organized), but for its mission and level of outreach to the greater community. Usually somebody within the church has gardening or farming experience, so growing food is not an issue. Organizing the garden, how it is run, its size, and water access is an initial challenge, but enough resources usually exist to guide this process. The gardens are scattered throughout the area. They vary in size, demonstrating that nearly all churches have the ability to start a garden of some sort. The issue becomes how to use and allocate the produce and the overarching purpose of the garden within the realm of the church. The best way to develop this mission is by examining precedent gardens.

Four of the area gardens were created through the aid of Faith in Place. These include gardens at the Catholic Worker House, the Center for Women in Transition, the Women’s
The garden shared by the First Mennonite Church and CIMIC is of a similar size, but is used solely by the two congregations. Most significantly, this garden is recognized for drawing people of different faiths together. This is a major focus of Faith in Place, advocating that all religions and peoples share the earth’s environmental issues, and that the response is not divided by religious lines. This garden is concerned not only with growing lots of food,
but creating a sense of community and educating those within the congregations.

Meadowbrook Community Church’s garden is much different than the others because it’s a rain garden. With an assortment of plants it does not produce food for humans to harvest and consume, but the plants still provide sustenance for wildlife. This garden is also low maintenance despite its presumably high startup cost. The size of this garden is large compared to other rain gardens, but necessary to offset the size of the church’s parking lot. This garden benefits the community by capturing its runoff that would otherwise hinder the city’s storm water system and contribute to downstream flooding, not to mention reducing pollution in the runoff.

The First Church of the Nazarene’s garden is one of the largest in Champaign-Urbana. Although it is more centrally located than other stewardship gardens, the church owns a large amount of land. To facilitate accessibility and the transport of equipment, the garden is separated into four plots with grass in between. There are also compost bins on site.

The Vineyard Church also has ample space for their garden. Around 25 parishioners participated in the single commons plot. All of the produce was donated to the church’s food pantry. From a functional standpoint, the garden was at a distance from the church building itself,
so this necessitated having a long hose stretch across the lawn to the garden. Otherwise, the garden was well maintained and highly regarded by the church in its first year.

Friendship Lutheran is organized in the form of a community garden for congregation members. There are eight plots that have mostly vegetables with a few flowers. The produce is for personal use, though some gardeners donate their produce to shelters or place it in the narthex for members to take. This is one of the older stewardship gardens in town as it is in its sixth year. Most other gardens are in their first or second year. While there was general interest in creating the garden, it was instigated by a sole member who helped provide gardening equipment and knowledge. This is true for most stewardship gardens; one person typically expresses the idea and others share the enthusiasm and support the garden.

Good Ground is most similar to the garden above in that it resembles a community garden. As the project of this thesis, this garden will be elaborated in chapter 4. The garden had 19 individual and two commons plots its first year. Mostly church members contributed, but one family from the adjacent neighborhood participated. Food grown on renters’ plots was for their own use, while produce from common’s plots was donated to the local food bank. The garden was much larger than initially intended, but it did follow part of the recommendation from Brian Sauder, Outreach and Policy Coordinator with Faith in Place, who said, “Start small, but have a big sign.”

Grace Methodist’s garden is unlike any other in the area. Remarkably, it has been operating since 1984. Facing pressure from development, church members decided to purchase six acres of farmland surrounding the church. As many members in the congregation had an
agricultural heritage, they decided to farm the land themselves. Each year, corn is harvested except for a onetime planting of soybeans. A local farmer donates his equipment and time to perform general farming tasks, such as planting and spraying. The church purchases the seeds, pesticides, and herbicides. During harvest, the day begins at six in the morning with the picking of corn. The corn is sold street side from seven in the morning until five at night for five dollars per dozen ears. This process is a highly anticipated congregational event with around 100 people, mostly retired farmers or professors, participating in some way for three weeks. Around $10-15,000 is earned in this short time span. The income goes to an array of 23 different missions that include local, missionary, Methodist, and several other agencies and non-profit organizations. Significantly, regular buyers often pay $10 to $20 per dozen instead of the asking price because they know the money goes to worthwhile causes. A number of factors make this garden a success, including the loyalty of customers and volunteers. But to achieve this level of success, the passion of the church and volunteers was necessary.

Each of these gardens functions in its own way. They are all successful and provide for the community. But what if they operated collectively? What would the local food system look like if each church in the city had a garden and a specific role? This thesis only speculates on these questions, but it suggests possibilities. The stewardship gardening movement could certainly mean much more to the community. At least two more churches in the area have considered starting gardens. Another church is donating land to Faith in Place to begin a community supported agriculture (CSA) operation. This is a direct example of how stewardship gardens are integrated into urban agriculture.
CHAPTER 3: THE STEWARDSHIP GARDEN

How is a stewardship garden different from a nonreligious community garden? This chapter defines the key aspects that are unique to stewardship gardening. The first section shows how spirituality is connected to the sacred, and its implications for the garden. The next section examines stewardship, its short fallings, how it’s informed, and what it means today. The last section offers a glimpse into Native American worldviews as example of an alternative environmental ethic. This alternative demonstrates the power that a renewed sense of spirituality and stewardship may have.

3.1 SPIRITUALITY

It is first necessary to define spirituality. The Latin root of “spirit,” meaning to breath, implies a life-giving force. Due to all of the ways the term has been used throughout history, its meaning has become diluted. From a symposium entitled “Agriculture and Spirituality”, the recurring themes of spirituality, while not itself defined, were relatedness, connectedness, attitude, ethics, and experience (Witte 1995, 53). Although it is difficult to narrow spirituality down to any one of these, for the purposes of this research, these descriptions help to locate specific instances of the spiritual.

The key descriptor of spirituality is that of experience. Spirituality is described as a search for the sacred (Hill et al. 2000, 66). While the same can be said of religion, it is different in that religion tends to have its grounding in the church as an institution. Nevertheless, spirituality is a common facet of religion. “To the extent that a person engages in spirituality that is prescribed by an identifiable group and whose spiritual pathways and goals receive some support and validation by that group, spirituality also occurs with religiousness” (Hill et al. 2000, 70). It isn’t necessary for religion to be a part of spirituality, but it is certainly a possibility.

The sacred, as the common denominator between spirituality and religion, has also become a convoluted term. It isn’t necessary in this research to identify the sacred itself, but rather to understand how it may come about and what it offers. “Sacredness manifests fundamental convictions requiring sacrifice, values worth defending, and virtues to be attained (Bachelard 1969 and Eliade 1992).” These convictions, then, are factors of spirituality. Spirituality is the action oriented term for sacred. Randolph Hester, Landscape Architect and
Professor at UC-Berkeley, describes the sacred as an “enabling form,” which serves as an impetus in light of incapacity (2006, 135). For instance, Good Ground gardeners always found a way around a lack of resources, as evidenced by the water shortage described in chapter 4. Chapter 7 goes into detail about this form, but for now understand that spirituality has the power to get people to act. This research assumes that the spiritual is also an enabling form.

The character of the sacred can be a powerful tool in light of environmental dilemma, when alternative ways of life are sought. “The search for meaning, community, self, or a better world are likely to be transformed when they are invested with sacred character” (Hill et al. 2000, 12). It is this process of transformation that is embodied in the spiritual as a search for the sacred.

3.2 STEWARDSHIP

A tangible form of spirituality may be found in stewardship. Nearly all gardens created by a religious organization claim they are acting out of stewardship. In fact, nearly all environmental efforts claim an air of stewardship. Upon questioning, gardeners typically describe stewardship as caring for God’s creation. Yet, this implies that we know how to care for the environment. As implied in Chapter 2, a proper caring involves both harvest and conservation. The appropriate balance of the two further obscures notions of stewardship, which have evolved since biblical times. Stewardship has developed from anthropo- and eco- centric ideals, and so has become trite and meaningless. “…the use of stewardship can represent an easy retreat to a comfortable concept, which avoids coming to terms with deeper philosophical and theological issues inextricably interwoven with the environmental crisis” (Palmer 2006, 64). We all have an innate appreciation for the natural environment, but this appreciation is expressed in differing ways with varying levels of understanding. “The inherent inclination to attach value to nature, however, is a ‘weak’ genetic tendency whose full and functional development depends on sufficient experience, learning, and cultural support” (Kellert 2005, 4). By critically examining our everyday ways of life and the context in which they’re situated, we may discover the proper modes of stewardship.

The context of stewardship is ever changing. The biblical interpretations of stewardship are given in the chapter 2.1. Yet, another mode to interpret contemporary, active stewardship is
through understanding the Book of Nature.

3.2.1 CONCEPTION – THE BIBLE & THE BOOK OF NATURE

The Book of Nature is a phrase implying that nature be read and experienced such that it offers new wisdom and guidance from the divine, as a companion to the Bible. While an actual Book of Nature was published in 1793 under the title *Bybel der Natuure* by Jan Swammerdam, a Dutch microscopist, and some of its themes digress to relate to the human-nature relationship, it should not be confused with the traditional conception of nature as a book. Dewitt, co-founder of the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN) and environmental studies professor at the UW-Madison, states that an evolving stewardship is informed by both the Bible and the Book of nature (2006, 153). While the Bible, God’s word, is static, the Book of Nature, adjunct as God’s work, is read in varying ways over time, in concurrence with the development of eco- and anthropo-centric ideals (Bono 1995, 74). The Bible, with its notions of stewardship discussed in the Early History chapter, tells us that, “…God’s wraith came…for destroying the destroyers of the earth” (Rev. 11:18, ESV in Fick 2008, 24). Initial metaphors regarding the Book of Nature, from Rabbinic Judaism, teach a “thinking back from nature to God,” which is about, “…reasoning by starting with the order of divine beings or, in Pluto’s case, of ideal forms” (Gould 2005, 210). Both of these interpretations suggest a more eco-centric worldview than presently exists when both books are read in conjunction with one another.

As the books detached from one another over time, they began to take their own anthropocentric perspective. Early accounts of the Book of Nature developed through a mysticism perspective. “Medieval emblem books and bestiaries described the natural world through a Christian theological lens, with animals representing particular vices, virtues or doctrines, such as the goat representing the sin of lust…” (Gould 2005, 210). Later, an actual, published Book of Nature appeared originally as *Bybel der Natuure* (1793). This text portrays early religious sentiment amid scientific progress and merges the two in a symbiotic relationship. “Amazed by the beauty and order he discovered in the organisms he observed and dissected under the microscope, Swammerdam could only draw one conclusion: order could not be a product of chance, it must, therefore be divine” (Cobb 2000, 126). Science leads to reason in faith, and faith explains science. Meanwhile, Johannes Kepler, German Mathematician,
Astronomer, and Astrologer of the 17th century, stated that, “...scientists are the priests of the Book of Nature,” which captured the developing attachment to science at that time (Clingerman 2009, 75). Science’s increased role in nature, in accord with the Enlightenment, led to greater distinction between science and faith, with a segregation of the two books, both seen as their own, independent truth.

With the separation of both books, the transcendentalists and romantics emerged on one side, while the scientists and the evolutionists were on the other. The extremes of each have led to notions of the “pure” form, such as Germany’s anti-Semitism and genocide during the Holocaust to ecological ravagement, respectively (Gould 2005. 210-211). It is clear through the writings of almost all religion and ecology scholars today that the two books need to be reunited. A search for the sacred, an act of spirituality, stewardship comes from a truth revealed by these two books, both widely interpreted, but one is about a given truth and the other, a discovered truth. Nevertheless, stewardship serves to pull the two extremes closer together so that the given truth affects the discovered and the discovered renews the given.

3.2.2 EVOLUTION

While stewardship is characterized by the two books, it is important not to conflate eco- and anthropo-centricism, which occurs when the two books are read separately. Most notions of an ecocentric stewardship were erased with the industrial revolution (DeWitt 2006, 148). A reemergence of the term stewardship appeared in the church in the 1950s and ’60s out of their need for money, time, and talent (Palmer 2006, 66). As an environmental movement was also occurring at this time, stewardship came to symbolize that, “…the natural world is linked to money and resources” (Palmer 2006, 66). In that nature is perceived as a resource to be exploited, stewardship regained a primarily anthropocentric worldview, which dominated over ecocentrism.

Today, as environmental problems persist and amid the call for spiritual renewal, continued assessment of stewardship is necessary.

“The interactive relationship every person has with the world has its effects…The collective results of all of the human actions join with changes of day and night,
the seasons…The dynamic world in turn produces dynamic human beings and a
dynamic human society. What makes for stewardship and right living, therefore,
is also necessarily dynamic…What all this means is that what is appropriate for
maintaining individual communities, and things such as the biosphere, is not a
constant” (DeWitt 2006, 149-150).

Significantly, Dewitt includes mention of the biosphere with regards to stewardship, alluding to
his more ecocentric perspective. However, the largely anthropocentric society of the present is in
needs of balancing with a developing ecocentric stewardship. Randolph Hester offers direction
by stating that, “In present terms, stewardship expresses caring for community, including other
people, plants, soil, water, and air. Both a set of moral principles and a course of action, it
requires active responsibility” (2006, 383). This responsibility isn’t merely active in that it is
taking place, but that it’s always changing.

For everyone, in one way or another, a renewed stewardship calls for a major lifestyle
transformation. In response to Lynn White’s criticism and appeal (see Chapter 2.3), religion
and a spiritual character are essential for much needed action. “The present threat to mankind’s
survival can be removed only by a revolutionary change of heart in individual human beings.
This change of heart must be inspired by religion in order to generate the will power needed
for putting arduous new ideals into practice” (Toynbee 1976, xx). Yet, religion need not act
alone. The most promising aspect of stewardship is its means to translate belief into endeavor.
“Stewardship requires general conceptual knowledge and actions based on that knowledge”
(Hester 2006, 384). Thus, religion informs stewardship and an informed stewardship
reinvigorates religion.

3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Often, when spiritual landscapes are discussed, indigenous practices and relationships to
the land are relevant. A basic understanding of native peoples and their ideas about sustainable
relationships with the land reveals an alternative environmental ethic to Western notions of
stewardship. The following is a brief overview of indigenous ideas about ecology. These can be
compared with the historical perspectives and other non-Western religions. Indigenous traditions
demonstrate a palpable form of spirituality in the landscape.

Indigenous knowledge has been coined as Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). One may define it “...as a cumulative body of knowledge, practice, and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment (Berkes 2008, 7).” Thus, it is rooted in learning through experience, which is based on one’s culture. Its essence lies in the place in which it is formed. Fikret Berkes, Professor and Canada Research Chair at the Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba, Canada, identifies four levels of TEK: “Local knowledge of land and animals, land and resource management systems, social institutions, and World view (2008, 17-18).” This knowledge essentially deals with place specific, practical knowledge that is guided by ethics developed over time which ensure an ecologically balanced lifestyle. TEK isn’t a knowledge that can be copied and applied to alien cultures since it is place and culture specific. Rather, it can serve as a model to strive for with regards to human-environment relations. The purpose of this research isn’t to romanticize TEK, but to better understand the way that spirituality shapes perceptions and realities of the environment.

In general, the human-nature distinction has never existed within TEK. The interaction of humans with their environment is one of reciprocity. This goes against the conservation ethic which states that humans should preserve nature. Rather, there’s an interaction of respect and humility that takes place between the two. For instance, there are several beliefs regarding the native Chisasibi Cree peoples’ hunting practices in the eastern James Bay area. These are: “It is the animals, not the people who control the success of the hunt; hunters and fishers have obligations to show respect to the animals to ensure a productive hunt; and a continued proper use is necessary for maintaining production of animals” (Berkes 2008, 98). The absence of hierarchy in the ecosystem is a key aspect of this form of ecocentrism.

Part of what makes TEK resilient is its ability to adapt to change. “All traditional societies that have succeeded in managing resources well over time, have done it in part through religious or ritual representation of resource management. The key point is not religion per se, but the use of emotionally powerful cultural symbols to sell particular moral codes and management systems (Anderson 1996, 166).” It is this facet of TEK that has applicability to the
Western world.

The main distinguisher of TEK from western knowledge is that of a holistic worldview. This involves a blurred line between ecological and spiritual. “Ecology is not just something to talk about, out of scientific curiosity, but should be seen as a way of life (Montejo 2001, 191).” Worldviews or traditional religions tend to impose a limiting ethic on one’s interactions with the environment which can be beneficial for the local ecology. For instance, one holiday among the Igorots of the Philippines prohibits work in the rice paddies from one to five days for religious purposes, which, in turn, allows for a synchronization of crops and aids in pest control, better managed irrigation, and organization of natural and social resources (Tauli-Corpuz 2001, 292). Worldviews serve as connections between the cultural and ecological. “Moreover, rituals enable farmers to adopt to continue to survive in their particular environment. Rituals allow the cooperation of neighbors … and reinforce group solidarity in relation to common crises and benefits (Prill-Brett 293).” Thus, worldviews guide communities toward sustainable lifestyles.

Applying a TEK approach, in some ways, would lead to a radical shift in contemporary environmental practices. This research doesn’t propose to completely relinquish modern ways of life. “Well meaning efforts to re-enchant the world by neo-pagan ideas and practices cannot fully restore what modernity has eliminated, namely, the interior dimension of personhood, soul, and spirit” (Zimmerman 2001, 257). Rather, it suggests that a new ethic is needed and that this ethic is rooted in the spiritual understandings of the world, in which humans rethink their place in nature. “The experience of solidarity, participation on the level of meaning and sense, is a specific human ability: it is one of our characteristic capacities which allows us to “belong to nature” in this way” (Zweers 1995, 80). If meaning is gained through experience and sense is a form of ethics, then spirituality is closely linked to this notion of solidarity.
CHAPTER 4: CAPACITY OF THE CHURCH

These notions of spirituality, ethics and experience, and the goal of solidarity mentioned earlier can be applied to Community Capacity Building (CCB). This is viewed as “The networks, organizations, attitudes, leadership and skills that allow communities to develop according to their own priorities and needs (Atkinson and Willis, 3).” In that solidarity is about “mutual agreement and support” (Encarta Dictionary), CCB offers a more practical logic to forming solidarity. The idea is that the resources and interest already exist, but lack a means to be brought together.

There are various ways to build community capacity. First, it is helpful to know what is sought in the building process. Robert Chaskin, Professor and Deputy Dean for Strategic Initiatives at the School of Social Service Administration at The University of Chicago, lists four defining characteristics of community capacity: Sense of community, commitment, ability to solve problems, and access to resources (et al. 2001, 14-16). Also listed are various strategies to achieve these qualities. These include: leadership, organizational development, organizing, and organizational collaboration (Chaskin et al. 2001, 12). These are fairly vague suggestions, but each project will typically emphasize one or two strategies over the other. The church offers the ideal setting for CCB with its existing organizational infrastructure, its situation within the community, which offers connection to a variety of resources, and its inherent sacredness that brings people together with collective endeavor.

4.1 TANGIBLE RESOURCES

There are tangible and intangible factors that enable a church to achieve a successful garden. Before intangibilities, such as the willingness and commitment of a community, are surveyed, an analysis of tangible, available resources is crucial. Taken from the five local assets given by the American Community Gardening Association (ACGA), are elements that help form a garden: land, associations (formed

Figure 4.1 Local Economy
relationships with others), institutions, local economy, and individual gifts (Abi-Nader et al. 2001, 55). Some of these are tangible, others intangible. The nearly 270 religious institutions in Champaign-Urbana own around 240 acres of tillable land (disregarding parking lots, but accounting for buildings). So, availability of land typically isn’t an issue, especially given container and rooftop gardening initiatives. As an institution itself, the church is already a part of the local economy and often has numerous associations through its members and outreach services. Combined, each of these makes the religious institution an ideal locale for a community garden.

The resources available to a church are generally copious, but some basic garden requirements like sunlight, water, and quality soil aren’t always readily available. As demonstration, Figure 4.5 shows the suitability of different areas for community gardens. This map factored in soil suitability, shade, impervious surfaces, and population density, which were each weighed equally. With the layers overlaid, the map shows that churches often have suitable land because they’re usually located around population centers. This hints that churches could play key roles, such as food hubs or niche markets, in the infrastructure of urban agriculture. Nevertheless, this mapping project doesn’t factor in the social desire of community gardens.
Figure 4.4 GIS data analyzed in order to create the “Favorability of Community Gardens in Champaign-Urbana” map.

GIS Data Sources:

- (NRCS)
- (USGS Tree Canopy)
- (U.S. Census 2000)
- (USGS)
Figure 4.5 Favorability of Community Gardens in Champaign-Urbana

- Religious Institutions: 240
- Religious Institutional Land: 278 acres
- Tillable Church Land: 240 acres
4.2 INTANGIBLE RESOURCES

This section focuses on interorganizational collaboration as a means to enhance community capacity. According to Chaskin, three factors – “the extent to which the benefits of interorganizational relations are seen, over time, to outweigh the costs; the degree to which the appropriate stakeholders are selected and participate; and the impact of such contextual influences as community history, racial dynamics, and political power” – determine the success of this collaboration (et al. 2001, 143). There are also various components of Community Capacity Building (CCB). Jackson identifies inside and outside facilitators and barriers that help bring projects to fruition. “Inside facilitators are enabling conditions created by communities for achieving outcomes…Inside barriers are those that block the pathway towards achieving goals,” while outside facilitators and barriers “are conditions external to communities” (Jackson 2003, 7-8). These notions of capacity building provide a methodological grounding in examining the spiritual as an inside facilitator and fostering the degree to which collaboration takes place.

Community gardens are one form of community capacity building. Numerous studies have shown the social and ecological benefits of community gardens. One project in Waterloo, New South Wales indicated that the gardens “contributed to the community more widely through promoting a positive sense of community, a place for friendship and generosity, the development of trust, and caring relationships between tenants (Atkinson and Willis, 9).” This research doesn’t necessarily highlight the benefits of stewardship gardening, but instead shows how interactions throughout the process of starting the garden may lead to these beneficial outcomes.
4.3 MORAL CAPACITY

Many people desire the benefits of CCB, but few know what it takes to bring them to fruition. The task of realizing urban agriculture focuses too much on environmental innovations without a grounding in culture. Thomas Berry, Cultural Historian and Geologian, was a fundamental actor in shaping cultural notions of ecology. His Thomas Berry Foundation and the subsequent Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale, directed by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, perpetuate his legacy. The premise of these organizations is stated succinctly by Berry:

“What is most needed in addition to the new technologies integrating our human needs with solar energy and the organic functioning of planetary life systems is a deep cultural therapy that will identify the sources of pathology and provide a way of returning to the jubilant life expression that should characterize any human mode of being” (2009, 138).

The shift to diets comprised primarily of local, organic foods will only happen through cultural, not technological, change. Although people may buy organic or shop at a farmer’s market, this is generally considered more an amenity than a necessity. The fact is it’s simply easier and cheaper to buy food grown hundreds of miles away at the local supermarket than to grow food locally. It will take more than providing alternatives and stressing their benefits because this is about changing a culture’s ethics concerning the human-nature relationship.

Some research has shown the cultural implications of community gardening, primarily in the case of underserved communities where food and community structure is in dire need. A community garden in South Central Los Angeles is one such case. Based on research by community garden scholar Laura Lawson, “In an area of the city that lacked recreation facilities and open space, the garden provided food, nutrition, household income savings, recreation, social interaction, and a place to carry on agrarian cultural traditions for 350 households and their social and familial networks (2007, 614).” This research, on the other hand, examines a particular community garden as a cultural product in a community that doesn’t necessarily have this need. It shows how urban agriculture can be implemented from a cultural rather than a needs based perspective to understand the possibilities that lie, more specifically, in stewardship gardening.
CHAPTER 5: GOOD GROUND GARDEN

This chapter focuses on one particular church’s endeavors to develop a garden. Involvement in this process by working as part of the garden committee, generating garden designs, offering advice, and gardening a particular plot allowed the researcher to locate the particular aspects of stewardship gardening that reinforce its vitality. While this type of stewardship gardening implies those of faith, the research focuses on spirituality as a universal term very much connected to ecology as faith or a form of environmental stewardship. Thus, it serves as a manual for those interested in beginning a community garden while providing one example of how this garden may materialize. This research is meant to empower those interested in community gardening. It is a search for the missing link between the concern for ecological processes and the actuality of community gardens as a form of urban food production.

Good Ground Garden is located in southwest Champaign in a 30-acre lot across the street from Barkstall Elementary School, and adjacent to the Cherry Hills subdivision. The surrounding land use is largely low density residential and agricultural. This is a prime development area of Champaign owing to its proximity to the Curtis Rd. and I-57 interchange. The site, owned by First Presbyterian church, was leased to a farmer in previous years for $3,500 a year. The church’s garden occupies only 0.28 acres of the 30-acre lot and its layout respects the turning radius of the farmer’s tractors. Good Ground had an auspicious start, as suitable land is the most important aspect in creating a successful garden.

Inspiration for the garden came from yearly mission trips to Malawi. In 2010, one
member was particularly moved by his experiences and decided to create a garden in response. He realized how poor the soil was in Malawi, yet they were still able to grow luscious tomatoes. The member thought of the garden as a spiritual link to Malawi.

With these beginnings, the church had several visions for the garden. A commons plot, the Lord’s plot, would grow vegetables similar to those in Malawi to serve as a connection to their fellow Lisanjala Church in Malawi. Initial consideration was given to selling produce from the Lord’s plot at roadside stands, and that the income would go to the church’s Malawi fund. Another idea was to dig a hand pump to serve as a bond to the Malawi church. One garden committee member’s desire was to have a large commons plot which would serve a local food bank. Significantly, this member focused on the environment, community, or rather the human ecology experience of the trip to Malawi in the response of a garden. One could argue that either of these is ecocentric.

Figure 5.2 Good Ground Design Alternatives
5.1 UPS AND DOWNS OF THE SEASON

Interestingly, the commons plot was designated as the Lord’s Plot. A committee member, with an interest in history, created this name with regards to a feudalistic system, in which serfs tend the land for a master, or lord. Interestingly, this refers to early notions of stewardship, clearly introducing hierarchy and autocracy (Palmer 2006, 70). The upkeep of the Lord’s Plot was a mandatory task requiring each plot renter to sign up for one week during the season.

A garden committee met about once a week for about two-and-a-half months before constructing the garden. Initial issues included: the overall size of the garden, the number of plots to include, path width, produce allocation, creating a mission statement, gardener guidelines, fencing, rental fee, whether to be organic, the overall garden design, assigning plots, a sign and logo, Lord’s plot maintenance, tomato stakes for the Lord’s Plot, and how to use the second Lord’s plot. The design also went through several phases up until one week before

Figure 5.3 Good Ground Master Plan
implementation. Some of these concerns arose in early meetings, others were addressed in an improvisational manner. For instance, the use of Lord’s Plot #2 was decided during the work day, in which one gardener proposed planting and tending corn and pumpkins.

A work day to prepare the garden was organized one week before the first planting date. A few days before this, one committee member, using a GPS, located key corners of the garden with stakes to delineate the plot. Surprisingly, 22 people participated, many of whom did not rent plots themselves. While there was little preparatory planning for the day and the allocation of tasks, people found ways to help and work progressed smoothly. To haul mulch donated by the Urbana Landscape Recycling Center, a farmer’s semi (belonging to a church member’s friend) was used. Also, when landscape fabric was depleted, someone suggested laying out wet newspaper instead. When thoughts arose as to till the plots or let gardeners manage themselves, someone showed up with a roto-tiller and plowed
without debate. Upon completion of one task, the next step was already progressing. A week later, all gardeners were set to begin planting. Shortly after, a dedication ceremony conducted by the pastor was held during a church service.

Several parties were involved in the garden. The church was essentially the administrator of the site, as it was responsible for its conception and maintenance. People from the adjacent community were to be given the opportunity to manage their own plot. Barkstall School used their plot as a learning opportunity for the students. The garden was not only a form of outreach to Malawi, but also to the Cherry Hills neighbors. Forming community was the main desire for this garden.

While the garden was well received by neighbors, only one Cherry Hills resident had a plot this first year. Fliers were distributed, and it was hoped that more neighbors would participate. After this first year, proving that Good Grounds is a reality, it is hoped that more gardeners might participate. Most Cherry Hills families are younger, relatively affluent, and have large lots.
There is a large South Indian population in the neighborhood, whom have large home gardens. There may be greater development and demand for a community garden in the future. Presently, it is significant that a neighborhood and Church without any real food needs have started a garden so large.

As with all gardens, Good Ground encountered several challenges. Unknown to many gardeners was the fact that the neighboring farmer had his fields sprayed a week before work day. Although the farmer was aware of the organic community garden, the licensed sprayer couldn’t distinguish the borders of the garden without the straw bales or any other features. Also, it was known from aerial photos and topographic maps that about half of the rainfall hitting the field would flow to the Northwest corner of the lot. As a result, this corner
was set aside for a second commons plot, which flooded, as predicted, in the first year. Due to capricious weather, however, the flooding covered three of the individual plots for a large portion of June. Then July brought drought, which was devastating because a water spigot wasn’t installed until mid July (due to City regulations, a well could not be dug). With all of the initial rain, the tomatoes in the Lord’s plot didn’t produce as expected. So, many lost hope for significant yields.

Despite these obstacles, the gardeners continued to develop the garden. It was fortuitous that the garden had water in the first place. The first request for water funding was denied. Then only a day later, an anonymous donor shifted their donations from the Malawi fund to the garden’s water line. Like the delayed installment of the water, a sign also appeared around mid-season which helped boost gardeners’ morale. Many had lost hope for the 133 tomato plants in the Lord’s plot before late season rains helped increase the yield to around 20 pounds of tomatoes to be donated to the local food bank. Also, a variety of tools were donated by gardeners, such as hoes, fertilizers, landscape fabric. Resources came together when most needed.

Most important to Good Ground’s success were the gardeners who provided support in opportune ways. One member in particular took charge of the garden. He regularly mowed weeds in Lord’s plot #2, applied fertilizer, ordered a soil test, helped with the flooding by digging trenches and using a sump pump, and updated the
garden committee with emails and pictures (since many lived some distance away). Without his gardening knowledge and commitment, the garden wouldn’t be the success it is today. Others also helped in humble ways. For instance, the school’s janitor watered not only the school’s plots, but also the Lord’s plot. These are just a few of the many examples people were involved through enriching actions.

Figure 5.18 Hoeing a path to divert water

Figure 5.19 A sump pump helps alleviate flooding

Figure 5.20 Resources came from all over Champaign-Urbana. Note all the material that was donated. Funding for a water line was eventually granted also.
5.2 FUTURE INTERESTS

The garden will likely be shifted about five feet east the next season. There may be other measures introduced to deal with the standing water. One gardener suggested either to fill the low area with soil to match the height of the sidewalk and allow water to flow over and into the storm drain, or to install a drain under the sidewalk leading to a ditch. Currently, it is likely that underground tiles will be installed and connected to the city’s storm water system to divert runoff. It’s also expected that the garden will expand next year to accommodate more plots, and perhaps a larger Lord’s plot. Yet, the design will still need to respect the adjacent farmer and the field’s feasibility for row crops. The decomposing straw bale border will likely be spread across the garden in early spring as mulch.

There were a few aspects that could have been better planned. The alternative designs presented to the committee should have addressed the overall functioning of the Lord’s Plot, including a plan to use the produce. Although the Lord’s Plot was well tended throughout the season, when harvest came few people picked tomatoes due to lack of planning. There wasn’t a specific site selected for donations and there was no designated harvest day. Many tomatoes fell to the ground and only a couple of gardeners picked the produce for donations.

A clear list of alternatives weighing costs and benefits of varying designs would have been useful. The committee was determined to have a community garden, but other ideas based on existing gardens should have been considered. The proposed designs focused primarily on layout, accessibility, and water access and not enough on motivation, purpose, and commitment. Planning events such as garden work days, potlucks, and perhaps awards parties should have been incorporated. These changes would help realize the garden’s full potential.

What was most striking working with Good Ground was the serendipity of people, skills, and resources to all unite. There were many barriers for Good Ground to be a successful community garden: most gardeners lived a driving distance away and weren’t part of the local
community, many already had garden spaces at home, and it was difficult to monitor the garden and track its progress when only visiting once or twice a week. Nevertheless, the tangible resources readily available helped to establish the garden, while the intangible resources ensured the garden’s progression throughout the season. Most gardeners felt that Good Ground was a success and plan to participate again next season. Judging from participation, perhaps those church members that garden do so out of the ingrained longing for community, which is part of the reason people go to church. The question becomes, can this sense of community be translated into that of ecological community?
CHAPTER 6: THE GARDENERS

Interviews with gardeners at Good Grounds offer clues about true intentions of gardening and desired outcomes. During the summer of 2010, eleven gardeners, including some of those on the garden committee and one gardener from a different stewardship garden in Champaign-Urbana, were interviewed. Each interview lasted from 30 minutes to an hour-and-a-half in which a set of questions were asked (see appendix B). The interviews typically took a conversational quality. This allowed the interviewee more influence in the topic choice, which expressed different areas of thought when gardening. For instance, interviewees more fully addressed some questions as opposed to others, often clarifying opinions by including anecdotes. The findings suggest entry points in discussions regarding eco- and anthropo-centricism.

One question had the gardeners rank their reasons for gardening (figure 6.1). It was found that food production was the primary reason for gardening. This was generally about quality regarding individuals’ own plots, but it became about quantity when dealing with the Lord’s plot. One may speculate on how reasons for gardening fit into these broader spheres: Spirituality, Ecology, Community, and Individual. Yet, no real conclusions can be drawn and individual responses to open-ended questions are more revealing than grouped data.

To organize interview findings into the broader picture, a chart of polar opposites (figure 6.2) shows common issues of gardening, food, religion, and ecology derived from the interviews and research. The diagram demonstrates how some of the interview findings might be placed...
into the broader scope of the thesis. It’s a diagram of dichotomies, however, in that these opposites aren’t viewed as discrete entities but two extremes of the same thing, such that they share a dialectical relationship. It is this thing, the essence of the two extremes, which categorizes this section. The list could certainly go on, but these ten serve the purposes of this thesis: Situation, Human Ecology, Spirituality, Reflection, Interaction, Practice, Food, Stewardship, Conviction, and Purpose.

Each category isn’t mutually exclusive and there may be some derivation from one another. For instance, stewardship was already shown to be a part of spirituality. Nevertheless, this series of ten essences serves to tease apart the qualities of a stewardship garden while showing how individual responses might fit into the broader spectrum of eco- to anthropo-centric.

6.1 FINDINGS

6.1.1 SITUATION

The first category is Situation, which is about decisions made in response to opportunities. This includes initial concerns regarding the garden, how they were addressed, and why the gardeners participate at Good Ground.

A total of 11 gardeners were interviewed, including plot renters (most of whom are church members) and participants at Good Ground (including the one gardener from Cherry
Hills), garden committee members, and one from another local stewardship garden. Nearly all those interviewed stated that this was their first community gardening experience. This may demonstrate the ability of religion to provide new opportunities that interest people of all ages.

Although most gardeners have ample space at home for a garden, the majority stated that their yard was too shady. Thus, they were willing to drive or bike in order to garden. As one gardener noted, “At first I thought it would be a hassle to have a garden that was away from where I lived…it would just be a nuisance…I actually found that it became more of a break from my daily grind…It’s been like therapy in some ways. You go there and feel you’ve had a vacation for an hour.” Many practical and interest-related opportunities attracted people to Good Ground, but gardeners often gained more than expected.

There were no problems in stimulating interest. Upon the initial announcement of the garden, at least 10 people committed. “Having gone to Malawi and then coming back with all of these…ideas and hopes in my head about simplifying and…learning lessons from them there. It was awesome to come back and…have a garden already going that I could have some food from and…be…already in the middle of it without even thinking about it.” Two people expressed interest in renting a plot too late to be included the first season and others have said they plan to participate or continue participating next season.

6.1.2 HUMAN ECOLOGY

Human ecology details how gardeners interact and situate themselves within the garden. One investigation is that of exploitation compared to integration with the environment. The desire to garden organically also speaks to the proper relationship of humans with the land.

At first, the decision to be organic seemed implicit. “Everybody just assumed that’s what it would be. There was never any discussion about it…In my mind that’s stewardship…protecting the land.” As a religion based garden, there were no gripes about gardening
organically and most appreciated the idea even though it would be several years until the garden would be truly organic due to past land uses.

Several gardeners were indifferent or not necessarily inclined to garden organically. “We ended up gardening organically, but that’s not particularly a value for us. How food is treated before it gets to market is not on my agenda for how I buy produce.” Another interviewee stated that, “Individuals should be able to do whatever they want to.” The fact that Good Ground was organic caused some people to evaluate organic gardening rather than accept it as fact.

Regardless, gardening makes one more aware of one’s place within the natural world. “I think it’s entirely possible that if you find people that have not gardened or produced their own food; that it changes how you feel about food you buy and consume. Are you less wasteful because you realize how much work goes into it?” On the values of gardening, “I think it is a recognition that we’re part of this system…If you just take food out of the grocery store, there’s not that same recognition.” Gardening builds awareness of how one is connected to ecological systems and forces people to review their values, such as organic gardening or not.

6.1.3 SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality regards giving meaning to seemingly banal material and happenings. It brings back the wonder of things around us. This can be experienced individually or with others through prayer or the ritual of hard work. Interviewees made varying references to gardening and religion.

Some gardeners felt that religious and gardening ethics were largely disconnected, some hadn’t considered the relationship, and most considered the correlation between the two to be inherent. “I think these kinds of things have a religious connection…churches growing food on their property has not been done very much, but to me…it just seems so logical.” This line of thought is typically a self drawn conclusion. “I have a strong spiritual sense of nature that is just something I derived on my own. That’s where I’ve had my spiritual experiences…Our well
being is intrinsically linked with the well being of the life around us…For me, that’s something that feeds into the pleasure I get out of gardening, the idea that things are growing, and the seasons, the cycles, just the excitement of putting a seed in the ground that eventually becomes something that feeds people…I think it’s sort of inherently spiritual whether people recognize it or not.” Since spirituality is about action and experience, it’s something that’s always happening, a bit like background music.

For many, spirituality is a personal sense that enlivens subtle wonders. “It starts with the requirements for us…to contemplate…the world around us…In all religions you look at the trees, you look at the plants, you’ll see God’s majesty and His imagination.” There’s an appreciation for the small things in life, or even the ability to make the most of an unfavorable situation. “Our first little tomato…I divided it so each of us got a little bite…in a strange sense, it was a very religious experience…We had grown this ourselves!” For these interviewees there’s an appreciation for God’s creation through awe and marvel.

Gardening doesn’t necessarily have to be spiritual, but religious thoughts about nature certainly don’t hinder the process. “I don’t think I consciously sat down and said there’s so much description of the planet, I have to start caring about this, but…when I read these things I get more and more attached to learning how things grow…etc.” Religion helps to inspire both the action and thought process behind gardening. “What I find is that in the garden we have this year…I thought about it in a more faith-based way than I ever thought about it…before.” It is faith that is the common denominator between religion and gardening. “Everybody starts a garden thinking ok, we’ll plant these beautiful little seeds with these lovely seedlings and we’ll work hard and we’ll water them and they’ll thrive and flourish. And then it rained. And then it didn’t rain…Despite all of our work…The relationship between hard work and success is different in a garden than it might be in other settings. There’s so much god provided input.” Faith, a principle of religion, allows gardeners to cope with uncertainties. But a garden shouldn’t be confused as the epitome of faith. “If you’re looking for God to speak to you, a garden is a
fine place to go. But there are a lot of places to go…To a certain extent, I think it’s possible to garden and have no faith at all.” Spirituality is an intangible resource that enables appreciation and wonder in light of the mysterious or unforeseen; it helps one to realize the benefits when the costs seem innumerable.

6.1.4 REFLECTION

Reflection is simply what comes to mind while gardening, such as thoughts about the past. Gardening stories serve as relatable or shared experiences that unite some of the incongruities found in religion and ecology.

While there’s always room for improvement, there were many positive thoughts about Good Ground after the first season. “In a lot of measures, I’d say it (the garden) was a resounding success…In individual measures of people who succeeded in the garden, it was not so much, some did some didn’t…There’s room for growth…There’s enough positive (sentiment) to move it forward…Let’s not give up hope.” Others are excited about the potential use of the land. “Boy we have really got something good there…Anytime you have a connecting road to an interchange on an interstate things happen.” On a different note, thoughts about how the garden speaks to ways of life may emerge. “We have like 15 types of tomatoes. Not really, but I can think of four or five. So when I was watering…that’s what I think about, unity and diversity…We all have things in common, but at the same time we’re so diverse.” This assortment of thoughts demonstrates contrasts of gardening in the moment compared with gardening for the future.

Oftentimes, reminiscences and thoughts about relationships to others occur. “My wife told me that when she was a baby, her mother would take her with her and put her in a basket while she was selling stuff.” Another gardener recollected
how harvesting during the month of fasting stirred up thoughts about migrant workers in the U.S. who can’t afford to buy the food they help grow and harvest. While people may begin gardening solely for the food, there’s an intrinsic quality of otherness to the stewardship garden.

The gardener relates to others through story, which is often expressed through hyperbole. For instance, “I had an okra forest out there!” (Most of this okra was offered to gardeners or donated to a shelter). One gardener noted how in England more men are present in the garden because most of the gardening tradition comes from allotments, in which there would be a shed where men would hide out for the day, “drinking beer, escaping the nagging wives, etc.” These exaggerations create humor, something we all love to share. “It (gardening) is the sort of thing stories are made of…You never hear about the flower garden that grew just fine…What we hear about is the year we watched dad run back and forth through the garden chasing the rabbits while waving his arms.” In these cases, story isn’t about the product that’s generated from the garden, but rather the spur of the moment series of emotions that can’t be staged.

6.1.5 INTERACTION

Interaction factors in community capacity building to express associations between gardeners; it may reveal how resources were brought together in a somewhat whimsical fashion. Interestingly, many interviewees had not participated in a community garden previously.

The mission of Good Ground was to connect people of varying backgrounds. Although most gardeners were church members, and while more gardening events would have been appreciated, gardeners valued the acquaintances made. “One of the work days…(we) were available and she ended up helping drive corner stakes that marked the plots. And the guy that was helping her…great guy. She walked around with him all morning and he let her drive stakes. It was neat to watch those two interact…He’s a very interesting guy that we would not otherwise have met.” Gardening with others also allows a shared experience. “One time in the middle of the season…I did bump into an older couple, and they were there to tend the Lord’s plot.
And we were commiserating about the tomatoes and how they weren’t doing very well…That made me feel better…It’s not just my garden. It’s not just me.” The community environment introduces another element of chance in the garden, in that you never know who you will meet.

Yet, these occurrences were too infrequent for most gardeners. They expressed desire for more work days, as many thoroughly enjoyed setting up the garden. On the first day of planting, one gardener mentioned how she met around a dozen people, but that later in the season there was never anybody around. Due to work and lifestyle schedules, the popular times to garden were Saturday mornings and Sundays after church.

The garden even connects participants with neighbors who aren’t involved with Good Ground. One gardener met adjacent neighbors and also observed and interacted with members of the school. “The family that lives just to the west of us…they just moved there…They’ve been visiting a lot with me every time I go over…I think they have seen deer (in the garden).” Also, “I’ve visited quite a bit with the custodian from the school,” and, “A couple of teachers in the afternoon…I’ve seen them bring 15 to 20 students over. They’re using it for a lab in the school…The kids are apparently quite interested in it.” A sense of community facilitates the sharing of resources and knowledge.

Having others around is more of an amenity, rather than a necessity for gardening. One gardener noted that if he had to pick gardening at home or in a community, he’d choose the home garden. He stated, “I feel like I take better care of the garden at home.” It’s a convenience issue. Though, a sense of community is also much appreciated, as this gardener also expressed that he desired to learn from others. It’s also easier to share a garden with friends when it’s on neutral ground. “It becomes sort of a joint venture…and occasionally having to put up with them pulling out vegetables that looked like weeds.” Collective experiences with a shared sense of community are more likely found in community gardens than at home.

6.1.6 PRACTICE

Practice details the local, practical knowledge and skill sets that gardeners bring. Generally, this knowledge is what inspires and creates general interest among gardeners. Some gardened with grounded knowledge and were a resource to others. Others knew how to can vegetables, which could be a future learning activity. Others made miscellaneous
recommendations. For instance, the spreading of egg shells around the base of a tomato plant was said to improve growth.

There were several methods employed for building a soil base. A few gardeners used horse manure and compost. Another used leaves as both compost and mulch. Worm castings were also stated as a valuable nutrient source. One gardener went into detail about his process of adjusting the soil for fastidious tomato plants. “We put peat moss in and work the soil…I’ll chew up the ground with a shovel. Then we’ll take a big scoop of that, put it in a bucket, and throw peat moss in, and mix that up by hand, and then put peat moss in at the bottom of it (the hole), then the plant, and then the soil peat moss mixture on top of it. Then we mixed up a bucket of Miracle Grow and watered that in.” These sorts of details are abundant in the garden, and are readily shared with others.

A concern for many gardeners was damage done by rabbits. The response of fencing, on one hand, took away from the community atmosphere. Several gardeners didn’t put up fences. One stated, “I figured if anything survived at all, I’d be happy,” while he also suggested that maybe an organized group fence for, say, all the plots in one row, could share a fence. For some, these practices were innately performed, while others were experimenting with different methods for the first time.

The whole range of gardeners was involved, from those who highly planned to those who were mostly improvisational. One kept a planting plan, whereas another described his garden as, “haphazard…We just went and bought a bunch of plants that looked interesting and just kind of spread them around.” There were also the pristine gardens with marigold borders next to those with pumpkins creeping into other...
plots. Usually, those with orderly plots had an agrarian background or a gardening heritage. The methods and types of gardeners described in this section elucidate how traditions are passed down and shared.

6.1.7 FOOD

Food was listed as the main reason for gardening, but the question is for quality or quantity of food? This section also describes the extent to which gardeners were willing to go for local or organic food. Many factors hinder local and organic food buying, but not necessarily local or organic food growing.

People often join community gardens to grow quality vegetables or as a form of socialization. Many shared the opinion, as one gardener noted, “You can’t buy anything like this in the store…it just tastes better.” Moreover, gardens can be an inexpensive source of organic vegetables as one gardener indicated. Yet, there is some desire for high yields also. This is especially evident with regards to the Lord’s plot. “This is not a home garden…This is a garden with a purpose…to grow as much food as possible for the needy.” Of course, there’s always enthusiasm with a bountiful harvest, but more often there’s talk of the prize tomato rather than the number of mediocre tomatoes produced. The difference comes when produce is grown for oneself or friends and family compared to that which is grown for those in need.

Many preferred the quality of organic food. Money wasn’t an issue in buying organic, but accessibility was the biggest impediment. “If I have a choice…I’ll buy local or organic. But I don’t go out of my way for local foods.” At most gardeners’ residences, it was not a reasonable option. Farmer’s markets conflicted with prior planned events and the distance to drive to the market was excessive. “Typically the farmer’s market is closed by the time I can get there... There’s no fresh corn when we do get there, which is why we go.” The availability of organic, local foods was an issue.
While almost all gardeners were inclined to buy local and organic if it was available, some did so on moral terms and others didn’t. “I think local stuff is better (taste wise) if you can find it…I wouldn’t go out of my way, but I like it better if it’s a reasonable option.” On the other hand, a few gardeners are able to derive most of their summer diet from the garden and farmer’s market. Local and organic foods are always highly favored, but those that purchase on ethical grounds will typically go to further extremes.

6.1.8 STEWARDSHIP

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, stewardship has many definitions, but the key descriptor is relationship. “…relationship is at the root of stewardship,” and, “it may be used as a simple euphemism of resource use - or even resource depletion (as in ‘wise use’)” (Berry 2006, 1). Thus, it can be either beneficial or harmful, ecocentric or anthropocentric. One developed notion of this is about responsibility, which may or may not be viewed as a delegated authority to act.

The Lord’s Plot is the most conspicuous feature of stewardship in the garden as it is about otherness. All of the gardeners had to care for the Lord’s Plot at some point in the summer. Due to the sense of responsibility and sharing, the Lord’s Plot was better kept than other plots. “I think everybody takes caring for the Lord’s Plot seriously.” The school’s janitor took special care of the Lord’s Plot even though it was not expected. “He’s been running a hose…and been watering about everything inside until we had water.” Stewardship doesn’t have to arise due to obligation, but it’s certainly about taking responsibility to care for something other than one’s own.

Otherness in the garden is best expressed through the giving of produce. It comes natural for many gardeners to give to family, friends, and neighbors since there’s often an abundance of produce. In the community garden, this act of giving can be extended. One Good Ground gardener offered okra to anyone and later donated to a food bank. The Lord’s Plot produced at
least 20 pounds of tomatoes, which were donated. Giving produce is one form of the otherness inherent in stewardship. Yet, not many gardeners spoke directly about stewardship. Perhaps out of humility, gardeners didn’t express how they helped others. So, stewardship can easily go unnoticed or unrealized. This may point to why the term stewardship has gone unexamined and become convoluted.

Those that did mention stewardship specifically made connection with an ecocentric perspective. Along with gardening organically, those at Good Ground felt that the garden was the perfect setting to express this stewardship. “I feel that…living simply, being good stewards has been a strong ethic that feeds into gardening and how you view the earth. It’s not yours to exploit. It’s yours to take care of and not to overuse.” The gardener becomes more aware of the otherness of the world. “We’re not here on this earth to clear as many things out as possible. They’re all living beings as well, and in a way they do worship God.” Since a lack of self interest is apparent in stewardship, some derive it as serving those beyond humans to a general concern for all of God’s creation.

There’s an aspect of stewardship that enables people to act, to take responsibility. This occurs in tandem with one’s moral sensitivities. Thus, there are differing forms of stewardship. The primary utility of stewardship, however, is that people act of their own impetus. In this sense, it is an invaluable resource. Stewardship is an undelegated self-willingness to act for others.

6.1.9 CONVICTION

Like farmers, gardeners have convictions, or profound beliefs, that they fervently endorse. These include gardeners’ ideas about organic practices. These beliefs help guide actions. There’s no one right way to garden, but that doesn’t stop people from attempting to garden best.

In the quest for the best garden, the question becomes whether we truly desire the
garden’s product, or if we instead enjoy the gardening process. The practice of gardening organically addresses both. People typically prefer to avoid spraying and to eat produce free of toxins. One gardener began by stating, “I started to use sprays awhile ago... (but) I’m a little concerned about using it on food products.” More important than the notion of clean food, is the idea of a clean environment. This gardener continued, “…but also then... our neighbors have little girls... (they) just lay down in the grass and make angels.” Values, especially growing organically, are reexamined and become more significant when applied in gardening.

The inspiration of Good Ground Garden was based on a mission trip to Malawi. One lesson drawn from the experience includes that of simple living, which was a common sentiment even among those that didn’t travel to Malawi. Seeing subsistence farmers surviving off of the poor soils in Malawi, the Garden Committee felt the desire to utilize the church’s 30 acres of prime farmland to grow for those in need. Even though gardening requires time, the work might be considered a form of prayer as in the Benedictine Abbeys mentioned in Chapter 2. “One of the things I strongly believe in is work first play second... The ethic I see in this is hard work produces good results.” No matter the difficulty of forming a garden, such as the lack of water, people found a way to cope with available resources.

6.1.10 PURPOSE

Purpose is about the goals and dreams of the farmers. Everyone has ideas about how a garden should look and perform, but how often does this become a reality? The garden is a place for experimentation, settlement, and growth. Much of gardening in these regards relies on faith, which is the element that connects it with religion. Faith is necessary to inspire gardening.
Without a garden in the first place, there would be no hope for any produce.

Gardeners like to try new ideas. One gardener expressed interest in saving the seeds from his pumpkin crop. Another stated that he had a very “laissez faire” approach to his garden, with a mixing of annuals and perennials and even a volunteer pumpkin that he lets grow just to “see what happens.” These gardeners share the purpose of gardening for food, but prefer the process of gardening over growing for copious harvest.

Having one’s own garden, with the ability to experiment, creates a sense of ownership. “I have, in recent times, become much more interested in putting down roots, literally, and making a home and having food that I grew…I’ve been wanting to garden for a long time.” With the same idea of “putting down roots,” it’s a possibility that the Southwest congregation of First Presbyterian may construct a church on its 30 acres. Gardeners are both imaginative and hopeful about the prospects of this land. “People need to be creative and innovative about how to expand and bring young people and use technology…There we sit with 30 acres of prime land that I call, maybe long range, the best in Champaign-Urbana with the chance to create something.” Regarding particular visions of Good Ground’s future, “I like to dream…about the garden and about what to do with that. My long term dream is to somehow expand that to a nonprofit commercial truck farming operation.” A variety of possibilities exist for the future of Good Ground. Those that are realized will likely come from the inspiration of Malawi with the notion of stewardship.

While there are a number of aspects in today’s society that drive people apart, there are also those that bring people together. Both of these are evidenced in this section. The garden is a setting for both types to emerge and develop. In terms of forming a successful garden for perpetuity, tangible and intangible resources are sought. Some features of the later are described through the views of the gardeners. It is through the intangible that the tangible becomes reality; the intangible is the driving force for a stewardship garden made manifest. For instance, many churches own land, but without the desire for a garden, perhaps from the inspiration of past experience or learning, the land doesn’t become an opportunity with the ability to grow; it’s merely considered ornamental or often overlooked.
CHAPTER 7: REFLECTION AND TYPOLOGIES

From the interviews a series of trends emerged about desires from the garden and how they are achieved, the organization and variety of the garden, the various purposes of gardening and forms of giving imagined, and ideas about how humans and all living things are meant to interact with one another in a given environment. For ease in transforming these ideas into an actual garden, a series of typologies are developed based on past and existing stewardship gardens.

It is known that community gardens are significant to community capacity building, generating environmental interest, and as food or money donations to those in need. These are diverging aspects, but are part of the broader sphere of urban agriculture. Such that a sole community building garden is more about social events, equity, and opportunity at the sacrifice of producing lots of food or restoring ecological functioning (gardening itself is environmentally taxing).

For instance, equitable participation is stressed over skills and knowledge based action for results. A garden solely about the environment might focus on wildlife habitat or water quality at the expense of using land for food production or using the skilled knowledge of a few rather than organizing large community events. A food production system focuses on producing as much as possible to give to food banks or sell and then donate the income. Thus, fertilizers may be used and again, skilled roles of individuals are assigned rather than having a communal gardening effort. These designs aren’t discrete. It is likely that a compromise of each will allow
the garden to function best, but there’s typically more focus on one aspect over the other.

It is necessary to understand the garden’s purpose in order to set priorities and make future management decisions, such as the option to grow organically. Stewardship gardens are unique in their ability to choose and structure this purpose since they build off of an existing community infrastructure, are not limited by need based decisions (they’re not dependent on creating community, growing food, or protecting the environment), and are embedded in a religious context (more thought occurs individually and collectively about one’s actions, such as gardening). This thesis is about how knowledge and values are translated into action with tangible product. A primary step in linking the two is through an understanding of probable scenarios.

7.1 COMMUNITY GARDEN

The community garden is about creating a place where people of varying backgrounds can share an experience and purpose. It may seek to help marginalized communities that are less privileged. Active citizenship, environmental and personal health, and community building are the garden’s goals (Abi-Nader et al. 2001, 31). Most importantly, the garden enables the building of relationships that might not otherwise occur.

The community garden functions like others, with individual plots for rent that give a sense of ownership. But there is also a commons plot in which everyone helps. Thus, individual plots reinforce one’s sense of ownership while the commons plot, managed by all, creates a feeling of duty and commitment for the whole. For its first season, Good Ground was a community garden.
Figure 7.3 Perspective of Community Garden type as applied to an expanded Good Ground Garden

Figure 7.4 Plan for Community Garden
7.2 ENVIRONMENTAL GARDEN

The environmental garden is unlike the others in that it doesn’t produce food for humans. The goals of this garden are to restore the environment, appreciate natural aesthetics, and to create wildlife habitat. Uses of this garden are passive; walking, sitting, or occasionally pulling weeds are typical activities.

This garden is a more direct evolution of typical landscaping projects of flowering shrubs and trees for aesthetics. Yet, the environmental garden appreciates a different form of aesthetics, as a “messy” look may be perceived. The true beauty of this garden emanates through its role as a wildlife habitat and, in the example of Figures 7.6 through 7.13, capturing stormwater runoff as a pocket rain garden. Other forms to consider are a prairie or a bioswale depending on site conditions.

Figure 7.5 Environmental Garden Icon

Figure 7.6 Perspective of Environmental Garden type in the form of a pocket rain garden in Good Ground Garden’s flooded area
Figure 7.7 Plan for Environmental garden as a pocket rain garden

Figure 7.8 Section A of the pocket rain garden plan
Figure 7.9 Section B of the pocket rain garden plan

Figure 7.10 Section C of the pocket rain garden plan

Figure 7.11 Section D of the pocket rain garden plan
Figure 7.12 Section E and F of the pocket rain garden plan

Figure 7.13 Section G of the pocket rain garden plan
7.3 CULTIVATION GARDEN

The purpose of a cultivation garden is to grow as much food as possible, either to donate or to sell for profit, which may be used for mission funds. Typically, one staple crop is grown for more efficient management. While vegetable quality is certainly an issue, this garden emphasizes quantity. Considerations include vegetable varieties, pests, diseases, irrigation, and fertilization. Such a garden requires scheduled tasks and frequent management interventions.

Tomatoes were chosen as a staple crop for Good Ground because they were often seen in the markets of Malawi. On less than a quarter of an acre a great amount of produce can be grown and sold or donated. In this example, crops are planted in rows for ease and efficiency, and then rotated. Tomatoes are an applicable example because they can be grown in a variety of climates.
Figure 7.16 Plan of the Cultivation Garden

Figure 7.17 Details of Cultivation Garden type demonstrate implications
Figure 7.18 List of all the varieties of tomatoes recommended by the University of Illinois Extension Service

Figure 7.19 Recommended crop rotation with primary tomato crop

Figure 7.20 Necessary considerations for soil quality when planting tomatoes
7.4 PERMACULTURE GARDEN

The permaculture garden is about an integrated functioning of ecosystem processes and human management of food producing landscapes. Some principles include observation and interaction, designing from nature’s patterns, producing no waste and recycling, catching and storing energy, and using and valuing diversity while still obtaining a yield (Holmgren 2002).

Permaculture is an ecologically sensitive system of design for food producing landscapes. “Permaculture (PERMAnent agriCULTURE or PERMAnent CULTURE) is a sustainable design system stressing the harmonious interrelationship of humans, plants, animals and the Earth” (Diver 2002). It began in the 1970s in Australia with the writings of Bill Mollison. This design methodology is about creating an integrated whole, but because of its broad understanding and application what results often seems more attuned to a series of uncoordinated best management practices for the environment. Nevertheless, unified designs may result if they are place sensitive.
Figure 7.23 Plan of the Permaculture Garden type

Figure 7.24 This offers a new way to grow tomatoes in a shared-plot setting, with compost placed inside the fencing; plants are supplied water through watering the compost rather than direct watering.
CHAPTER 8: DIRECTION FORWARD

One might imagine how these garden types fit into the eco- to anthropo – centric spectrum. Though, this spectrum is extensive. While it may be fairly easy to judge one garden as more eco-centric than another, it is difficult to precisely place them within the spectrum. Regarding the divisions of religion and ecology, there are further themes in which the garden falls. Although there are few explicit connections between these themes and their relation to eco- and anthropo – centrism, the typologies serve to speculate on these relations. Figure 7.25 depicts one interpretation of how the garden types fit into these themes, such that the left side

![Figure 8.1 Situating the garden types within the larger eco- to anthropo- centric spectrum](image)

is more ecocentric and the right side is anthropocentric. There is some overlap, but the gardens tend to fall more on one side of the spectrum than the other. While this is speculative, the existing and past gardens along with the interviews help situate these trends. For instance, a cultivation garden relies on science to inform the individual about a reasonable spacing between plants to best capture sunlight and produce as much food as possible for humans, and resembles
the typical planned, agricultural system of the United States. In urban agriculture, a variety of
gardens are needed, but the extremes of each side should be avoided. “In terms of ecological
democracy, stewardship efforts are most successful when they satisfy multiple purposes and are
least successful when they focus on narrow, exclusive purposes” (Hester 2006, 383). An ideal
stewardship garden will entail a melding of eco- and anthropo-centrism, religion and ecology,
such that the divisions are blurred, but a coherent purpose and functioning of the garden is
understood.

The previous chapter teased apart varying stewardship garden types to understand their
context and possible directions. However, they are all part of one movement. This chapter will
illustrate how these gardens can become a coherent whole. To do so, we return to the common
denominator of stewardship gardens, which is the spiritual and sacred element contained within.
Four basic features of a sacred landscape are given: natural boundary, center, connectedness, and
particularness (Hester 2006, 127-133). This chapter offers a description of these followed by the
ultimate, unifying goal of design gestalt. An application of the sacred landscape components to
each of the garden types is diagrammed in Appendix C.

Natural boundary is what sets the garden apart from its surroundings. The garden’s boundary may be natural in the form of existing topographical
demarcations, or created by imported natural elements, such as straw bales, trees, and tall grasses. The form of this boundary is similar in all gardens,
typically along the perimeter, but the material may vary among the garden
types. (Hester, 130).

Center is the place where people know to look for each other. It’s a location of shared experience and identity. Sometimes it’s marked by a
structure, such as a sign. Other times, it’s mentally known, though invisible. A
typical form of center found in faith based gardens is the commons plot. The
size and placement of this center varies within the given typologies. (Hester, 127-128).
Connectedness isn’t necessarily something that is seen. It is typically a feeling. Like spirituality, it can be both inward, involving self-reflection, or outward and shared. When this essence is present, feelings of togetherness, integration, and community follow. The most palpable form displayed in gardens may be the pathways and how they connect individuals and their plots to the center. More importantly, it’s about the animate and inanimate that make the garden come alive. (Hester, 130-131).

Particularness is the element of the garden that is its unique identifier. It may be based on cultural heritage, the garden’s inspiration, or gardeners’ values. As it is about identity, it is ideally suited to unite the stewardship gardening movement. Particularness is more likely to be instantly explicit when it is a conscious effort as a designed element. The conspicuousness of this element is necessary, as this research proposes that particularness be the element that visually represents and helps unite the whole stewardship gardening movement, such that its structure is noticeable to others and also permits expression of the individual garden’s identity. As this is a movement, its general statement should be expressed to others. (Hester, 132-133).
8.1 PARTICULARNESS DETAILS

The structure to represent the stewardship gardening movement is a combined table and shelter design. A variety of elements in the structure allow it to be unique both to the movement and to each garden. The center of the roof is cut for a circular glass piece allowing a concentrated view toward the heavens with the light shining through signaling that instances of the divine may be discerned on earth. The four parts of the roof extend from the center point to other gardens, making evident that this is not the only garden. The murals on the four sides depict the inspiration of the garden. They may be four different impetuses, or all be related. The benches, instead of the table, support the roof. This represents that the garden and the whole movement would not be possible without the people and their acts of stewardship.

The structure should be simple to build, with dimensions shown in Figure 8.7. The
choice of materials is left to the gardener, so that the structure may withstand regional elements
and be cost sensitive. It is recommended that wood be used, so that people may carve their
names and gardening stories in the table, benches, and posts. These stories supplement the
murals in building individual identity and allow representation on part of the sole gardener. For
story is what allures people to the essence of gardening.

Figure 8.7 Overhead perspective of Particularness element
Figure 8.8 Dimensions for building the Particularness element
8.2 DESIGN GESTALT

Gestalt is the goal of this thesis, as it should be for any design project. One might think of it like a story. For instance, a story is composed of a variety of interacting characters, a plot, a climax, and resolve. These are all within particular settings and developing over time, such that we may break down each of these elements. Though, if any are left out or rearranged, the story is no longer the same. The lasting emotion and feeling of a story can’t be described to another. It must be read to be fully understood. Design gestalt functions in the same way. Hester defines it as, “a pattern of elements that is so unified as a whole that its properties cannot be derived from the sum of its parts” (2006, 127). It is an ineffable feeling based on experience. Hester claims that sacred landscapes are most likely to embody design gestalt (2006, 127). Thus, the components of a sacred landscape – natural boundary, center, connectedness, and particularness – alone are not elements of gestalt, but are more likely, when together, to bring about gestalt.

We all have favorite stories that capture our hearts for varying reasons. These stories inspire us and influence our lives in a proactive manner. This enabling capacity is also evidenced in sacred landscapes containing natural boundary, center, connectedness, and particularness. “The gestalt emerging from these produces a most powerful framework for community design, mystical yet extremely practical for the designer seeking to create enabling form” (Hester 2006, 133). Stewardship is central to the sacred garden’s enabling trait, and will reach its ideal form when design gestalt is achieved.

8.3 GESTALT, SACREDNESS, AND NUMINOUSNESS

Part of the enabling capacity of stewardship gardens not only creates a product, but also reawakens one from moral apathy. The mysticism and spirituality inherent in any garden inspire wonder and cause one to think about the intersection of self and worldly matters. This happens through the necessary work of the garden which is then translated into ritual, leading to notions of the sacred, from which meaning emanates, which, if powerful enough, has a lasting quality.

Work required in the garden occurs because it’s necessary. We perform it to sustain the garden. Particularly, the work occurs to meet the demands of our idealized garden. “In our efforts to improve on nature, we are guided by a vision of paradise…this hope for the future is at the heart of all gardening” (Unruh 1997, 158). In this sense, the garden is a model of utopia.
This thesis helps to inform our ideas about utopia, which are found at the root of all gardening endeavors.

The devotion that naturally occurs with persistent work leads to ritualized work. “…the concept of sacred time was utilized in the form of recurring rituals and ceremonies that reintegrated human beings with the eternal” (Nollman 1994, 215). In this process, a sense of time is lost. For instance, “…the act of foraging…described as walking around a locale simply picking whatever it is we want to eat in the moment,” is a form of work that occurs in all gardens and alludes to the capricious interaction that disregards the pressures of time (Nollman 1994, 220). Clearly, the eternal, the sustainable, necessitates a loss of time.

It follows that ritualized gardening informs the sacred, which is generated through meaning. “…the sacred garden emerges when a sense of place is wed to a sense of the timeless” (Nollman 1994, 224). Given that ritual entails the timeless, a sense of place is about the individual meaning we derive from a place. The Garden of Eden, the prototype for sacred gardens, demonstrates where meaning comes from:

“…the human entity is divided into three aspects: body, spirit, and soul. The biblical Heavenly Garden, the Garden of Eden, is an attempt to satisfy these three spheres of our being; our need to feed our physical body, to quench our endless thirst for beauty and spiritual experiences, and to bring some peace to our everlasting soul, struggling with the problem of morality and coming to terms with mortality” (Stein 1987, 353).

These three aspects allude to the garden typologies of cultivation, ecology, and community. Notions of stewardship are most resonant within the last aspect, of pleasing our soul.

Since there’s always the need to redefine ourselves within the world, the sacred has a lasting quality. David Orr, Professor of Environmental Studies and Politics and Special Assistant to the President of Oberlin College and a James Marsh Professor at the University of Vermont, claims that an “enhanced spiritual awareness” is one of the major challenges to sustainability stating that, “When we enter to domains of desire and intention, we need more than instrumental reason and rational planning. We need a sense of mystery and humility,
gratitude and celebration” (McDaniel 2002, 1461). Spirituality is heightened in the sacred
garden containing both, “…the gardener’s own deep contemplation and loss of individual self”
(Nollman 1994, 228). This requires both the inexorable process of redefining stewardship,
through contemplation, and maintaining faith, an appreciation of the unknowable, not of oneself.
In the ever changing world, both of these are never quite satisfied. “What never leaves, for the
imagination, is the open and creative desire for the sacred…” (White 2007, 35). The sacred
garden is caught in a cycle of action and meditation. The Hebrew root of Eden essentially means
“…enjoyment and enlightenment, as in the joy that comes as one experiences music. One not
only enjoys oneself, but in the process one becomes more refined, more delicate, more attuned”
(Stein 1987, 353). It’s likely that improved musical quality comes only through this process of
refinement. In the same sense, the sacred garden both defines and is informed by stewardship,
enhancing itself over time, with the mystical qualities intrinsic in faith attracting and binding the
process together as a whole.
CHAPTER 9: BROADER SIGNIFICANCE

As stated earlier, a garden need not be organized by institutionalized religion in order to be sacred. A garden is sacred in and of itself and dependent on the gardener. While this research entails a largely Western perspective, the implications of stewardship, ecocentrism to anthropocentrism, can be applied across cultures. The historical perspective is different for each religion, but the typologies are relevant regardless. The broad purpose of this thesis is to create a new understanding and to inspire others to discover more about the stewardship garden.

With respect to suburban landscapes, home to many churches with abundant land, this research has significant implications for the rural-urban fringe. The setting of Good Ground Garden within Cherry Hills is very similar to other subdivisions. Good Ground offers one example of a community garden that works in an area where food is not necessarily needed, but in which there are many opportunities for urban agriculture. Imagine a food network comprised of religious organizations spanning the suburban landscape. In fact, Mesopotamian temples once served this very purpose as food hubs (Steel 2009, 76). A food market organized by religion does not go against historical ties.

An active research methodology in the field of Landscape Architecture was the only means to complete this thesis. A long-term devotion and high level of involvement demonstrates one’s influence as the design evolves. In design research, it isn’t necessary to separate oneself from the research project. One Landscape Architecture firm states, “We need interactive processes that involve the dweller/user/community in each stage of the placemaking process… By crafting place and story in situ with local people and local artisans, we stand a chance of creating local meaning in place (Mongard 2006, 4).” To understand how this story and layers of meaning evolve, the researcher must interact with those associated.

This process is essential in designing sacred landscapes. For, “…the sacred garden exists only as we relate to it and not as any specific garden design. One does not ring up a Landscape Architect to order a sacred garden…Should we locate it, we find that it draws us into itself” (Nollman 1994, 226). A Landscape Architect isn’t needed begin a stewardship garden. Anyone can till a few plots for growing. The first designs for Good Ground Garden were merely a matter of rearranging plots according to function and respective location. While these designs provided alternatives, Good Ground would have existed without a Landscape Architect. The role of the
Landscape Architect is organizational. A variety of interests need to be considered and unite around one final design. The Landscape Architect can assist with technical information, but more importantly provides direction through discovery of the garden’s meaning and purpose. Once a mission statement is complete, then all following concerns have guidance.

Good Ground Garden was unique in that a mission trip to Malawi inspired efforts and early on in the planning process the garden committee decided they wanted a community type of garden. Though, as shown from the interviews there were still some discrepancies with issues such as organic gardening. Clarification and communication throughout the season would have helped. If the initial design alternatives process could be repeated, each alternative would address different meanings of the garden rather than the different placement of plots solely with regard to function. Also, all of the gardeners should have been involved in the design process. A survey was conducted after the first season to see which garden type the gardeners preferred. Most gardeners chose the community garden type, but this sentiment would have been better focused if the survey was given before the season began. While the garden committee has the final decision, this method of survey allows individuals to be involved and to know the basis of the garden’s meaning and purpose.
CHAPTER 10: EPILOGUE

The Stewardship Gardening Guide (Appendix D) is about generating awareness. The survey sent to Good Ground’s gardeners at the end of the season was an early version of the guide, demonstrating the different garden types. While the community garden type was most desired, instances of the other types also sparked curiosity. For instance a debate between committee members about the use of goldenrod as a garden border was spurred by the survey. The Guide introduces new ways to think about stewardship gardening and the possibilities it entails.

There were varying responses to using the guide. One succinctly stated its value. “(It) underscores the need/opportunity to have a wide variety of similar types of gardens for a variety of purposes…The take away for me is that the lines are blurred while differentiated as well…one could say, ‘who cares, it’s all gardening and it’s all good.’ However, we know that there is a number of continuums in the mix and being able to self identify is critical in making sure the intent/goals sought by any group will be true to their intent.” Overall, feedback was encouraging, including that of a Pastor who simply suggested changing “mankind” to “humankind”. Yet, Faith in Place stated that they couldn’t use and distribute the Guide because the organization can’t support and defend notions of eco- and anthropo-centrism. They felt that these would confuse people and drive them apart, whereas church is about bringing people together. For instance, the stewardship garden, as it exists, already brings opposing faiths, such Mennonite and Muslim, and opposite social classes, like the school and church at Good Ground, together. The guide may be most applicable to individual congregations as opposed to organizations that attempt to appease a variety of faiths.

The Guide and some of the research portray a specific agenda in ecocentrism, such as the tacit promotion of permaculture. For instance, the permaculture garden is placed conveniently in the center of all the gardens (figure 7.1). Then, the research later concludes that a variety of gardens are needed. This was done subconsciously. Permaculture was an early interest in the development of the thesis, but never became the focus of the research. At present, permaculture is viewed as radical and its philosophy gets lost in the variety of applications that claim to be fully or partly permaculture. Further research involving a comparison of the varying forms of permaculture showing how each is uniquely related to place would help to situate permaculture
and build awareness of its value.

Before this thesis began, I hypothesized that the religious institution would take an anthropocentric view, but that the spirituality emanating from religion and not confined to the institution would take an ecocentric perspective. This may be true to some extent, but is highly dependent not only on each religion, but also on each congregation. The institution has to conform to the anthropocentrism of modern culture in order to survive in today’s economy, but individuals each have their own desires and ideas about worship. Use of the Stewardship Gardening Guide and its outcomes may help to prove this hypothesis, highlighting incongruities in need of clarification in order to realize their dialectical relationship in the form of a garden.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Figure A.1 Placing historical perspectives within the eco-to-anthropo-centric spectrum

**Ecocentrism**

**Anthropocentrism**

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**Middle Ages**

4th-15th centuries

- **Saint Francis of Assisi**
  - (1181-1226)
  - "...nothing comes from me; everything comes from nature of which I too am a part."³
  - "manual labor - was an act of prayer"
  - It was their duty for "restoration of earthly paradise"
  - "chopped down sacred groves"³

- **Benedictine Abbey**
  - (550-1150)
  - "It is God's will that nothing remain unknown to man as he walks in the light of nature; for all things belonging to nature exist for the sake of man."⁵
  - "manual labor - was an act of prayer"
  - "chopped down sacred groves"³

- **St. Augustine of Hippo**
  - *City of God* (5th century)
  - "chopped down sacred groves"³

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**Renaissance**

14th-16th century

- **Paracelsus**
  - (1493-1541)
  - *Credo*
  - "The Recovery of Eden through its reinvention on earth is premised on the transformation of wilderness into garden."⁴
  - "Steward with responsibility to care for Creation...acting with delegated authority"¹

- **John Calvin**
  - "God had authorized human dominion over the earth."⁴

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**Eden**

**Genesis**

- **Horizontal relationship with creatures¹**

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**Man's dominion over nature¹**

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**Deforestation and Exploitation of Natural Resources**

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**Genesis**

**Eden**

**Horizontal relationship with creatures¹**

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**Man's dominion over nature¹**

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**Deforestation and Exploitation of Natural Resources**
Bernardino Telesio (1509-1588)
*belief that God was imminent within nature and that all matter was alive.*

Giambatista Della Porta
Natural Magic (1558)
*...the magician as nature's assistant in the cultivation of crops and breeding animals, nature being the operator, the magician preparing the way.*

Tommaso Campanella
City of the Sun (1602)
*necessity of...the fusion of all religious sects as the world returned to the golden age of simple, natural, primitive faith.*

Johann Valentin Andrea
Christianopolis (1619)

Gerrard Winstanley
Diggers-millenarian utopists (1649)
*the great creator, Reason, made the earth to be a common treasury, to preserve beasts, birds, fishes and man...not one word was spoken...that one branch of mankind should rule over another.*

George Foster
Ranters - pantheistic sect (1650)
*God was a 'mighty Leveller,' who would reduce all political powers to the same level and return everything to communal ownership.*

René Descartes
Discourse on Method (1637)
*we could 'render ourselves the masters and possessors of nature.'*

John Locke
*God had authorized human dominion over the earth.*

Ralph Cudworth
*...a similar plastic nature organized and directed the activity of the entire larger cosmos, ordering the growth and reproduction of plants, herbs, grasses, minerals, and the whole heavens.*

Plastic Natures
*The cosmos was reduced to a vegetable - still alive, but not uncontrollably so.*

Henry More
Antidote Against Atheism (1653)
*Spirit...was therefore a principle of organic life within matter, causing motion from within, and unifying and maintaining the organization of its particles,* and *God's providence, combined with human reason in the wise use of nature, would prevent runaway technology from taking its toll.*

New England Puritans
*God had authorized human dominion over the earth.*

Figure A.1 (cont.)
The Age of Enlightenment
18th century

Jean Jacques Rousseau
(1712-1778)

Philosophy of Nature
"Indigenous peoples and their religions were not primitive but noble."3

Johann von Goethe
(1749-1832)

Samuel Coleridge
(1772-1834)

Ralph Waldo Emerson
(1803-1882)

"The idea of the sublime as a religious experience became an important component of the European Enlightenment. Nature was now cathedral, temple, and Bible."4

John Ray
Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of the Creation (1691)
"plastic natures as evidence for God’s action in the mundane world."5

The Women in the Wilderness Community
(1694)

Ephrata Cloister
(1732)

William Derham
Physico-Theology (1713)
"...accepted the Judeo-Christian ideal of human dominion over nature in the form of a stewardship that supported progress."

Industrial Revolution
18th-19th centuries

Harmony
(1805)

Zoar
(1817)

Bethel/Aurora
(1845)

Jewish Farm Communities
(19th century)

Oneida
(1841)

Hutterite
(1842)

The Second Great Awakening
1800-1840

"We are "above nature" in the sense of being able to manipulate and effect it... be we are also part of it, dependent upon it for food and air, and energy - from both fossil and renewable sources."1

"plastic natures as evidence for God’s action in the mundane world."5
Henry David Thoreau
Walden (1854)
The Maine Woods (1864) - National Parks Movement

J.F. McLennan
The Worship of Animals and Plants (1869-1870)

E.B. Tylor
Primitive Culture (1871)
coined “Animism”

F. Max Muller
Natural Religion (1888)

Robertson Smith
Lectures on the Religions of the Semites (1889)

Baldwin Spencer & F.J. Gillen
Native Tribes of Central Australia (1899)

Emile Durkheim
Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (1912)

John Muir
(1838-1914)
Sierra Club (1892)
“Father of the National Parks”
National Parks - “Founded significantly on perceptions of the sacredness of natural systems.”

James G. Frazer
Totemism and Exogamy (1910)
The Worship of Nature (1926)

Robert Von Ranke Graves
The White Goddess (1948)

Eco-Justice Movement
Mid 1960s

Mircea Eliade
Patterns in Comparative Religion (1958)
The Sacred and the Profane (1959)

Catholic Worker Movement
(1933)

Koinonia Farm
(1942)

Charles Darwin
The Origin of Civilization and the Primitive Condition of Man (1870),
“came to view religions as originating in misperceptions that natural forces were animated or alive.”

J.F. McLennan
The Worship of Animals and Plants (1869-1870)

E.B. Tylor
Primitive Culture (1871)
coined “Animism”

F. Max Muller
Natural Religion (1888)

Robertson Smith
Lectures on the Religions of the Semites (1889)

Baldwin Spencer & F.J. Gillen
Native Tribes of Central Australia (1899)

Emile Durkheim
Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (1912)

John Muir
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Robert Von Ranke Graves
The White Goddess (1948)

Eco-Justice Movement
Mid 1960s

Mircea Eliade
Patterns in Comparative Religion (1958)
The Sacred and the Profane (1959)

Catholic Worker Movement
(1933)

Koinonia Farm
(1942)
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Do you have a garden at home?

Have you participated in a community garden before?

What are your gardening goals for this season?

Where do you live (general location)?

How did you find out about the garden?

Are you involved with First Presbyterian Church? How so?

Where do you go to buy food?

What do you eat/what do you grow?

What gardening practices do you use? (fertilizers? keeping rabbits out?)

How do you use the produce from the garden?

How do you think of the moral ethic from church relating to ethics concerning the environment, or do you?

On a scale of one to ten, with one being little significance and ten being a great deal, what difference does gardening with others make?

What are the challenges of relating your religious beliefs and values to the garden?

How important is buying and consuming local foods to you, with one being that you purchase foods that are most readily available and easiest to prepare and ten being that you'll go out of your way to find local foods and learn new recipes for unaccustomed foods?

What’s the biggest barrier to buying local foods?

How would you rate this garden compared to gardening at home?
Of these reasons for gardening:
- health
- food
- exercise
- socializing with others
- environmental concern
- a personal connection to agricultural life
- to support a form of community activism
- a form of learning
- other __________________

Rank all (1-8+, with 1 being the most important) that emphasize why you garden.

Did you initially join Good Grounds Garden for food production or for socialization? Has this changed throughout the season?

Was Good Grounds garden a success this first year?

What would you like to see more of in the garden, both in short and long term?

Do you think you will be involved next year in the garden?

Is there anything else you’d like to add?
APPENDIX C: SACRED GARDEN APPLICATIONS

**Community Garden**
- Engage and empower those affected by the garden at every stage of planning, building, and managing the garden project
- Foster environmental, community, and personal health and transformation
- Design for long-term success and the broadest possible impact

- Integrate community gardens with other community development strategies
- Build on community strengths and assets
- Embrace and value human differences and diversity
- Promote equity
- Honor ecological systems and biodiversity

**Accessibility**
- Foster relationships among families, neighbors, and members of the larger community

**Equity**

**Feasibility**

Figure C.1 Sacred Garden components applied in the form of a Community Garden

**Tomato Farm**

- Crop Growth and Yield
- Developmental Processes
- Genetics and Breeding
- Fruit Ripening and Fruit Quality
- Irrigation and Fertilization

**Row Crops**

**Efficiency**

**Uniformity**

**Crop Rotations**

**Crop Protection** | **Production in the Open Field** | **Greenhouse Tomato Production** | **Postharvest Biology and Handling**

Figure C.2 Sacred Garden components applied in the form of a Cultivation Garden
Figure C.3 Sacred Garden components applied in the form of an Environmental Garden

**Environmental Garden**

- Ecological Restoration
- Recognition of Natural Systems
- Nature as Sublime
- Wildlife Habitat

- Prairie Restoration
- Rain Garden
- Biodiverse

- Capacity
- Flexibility
- Cyclical
- Organic

- Passive Use
- Landscape Delineation
- Native Plantings

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Figure C.4 Sacred Garden components applied in the form of a Permaculture Garden

**Permaculture Garden**

- Observe and interact
- Catch and store energy
- Obtain a yield
- Apply self-regulation and accept feedback

- Concentric Zoning
- Irregularity
- Biomimicry
- Adaptability

- Use edges and value the marginal - Creatively use and respond to change

- Integration Diversity
- Agroforestry
- Wildlife/beneficial insect habitat

- Natural Succession - Intercropping
- Self-Reliant/Closed-Loop System
- Recycling soil humus
- Rainwater Harvesting

- Design from patterns to details
- Integrate rather than segregate
- Use small and slow solutions
- Use and value diversity

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APPENDIX D: STEWARDSHIP GARDENING GUIDE

The guide developed from this thesis can be found in a supplemental file named StewardshipGardeningGuide.pdf. It serves as a synopsis of the thesis and is meant to stand alone. In the guide there is a survey for gardening groups so that they may situate themselves within an understanding of stewardship in order to create a clear, tangible gardening process and product.