



*Where is God
in creation and
in our lives?*

Monday
March 9, 2009

The natural world is the larger sacred community to which we belong. To be alienated from this community is to become destitute in all that makes us human. To damage this community is to diminish our own existence.

-Thomas Berry, [The Dream of the Earth](#), copyright © 2006 Sierra Club Books.

Greenhouse gases exist naturally in the atmosphere surrounding Earth, and perform an important function: without their warming effects, "the greenhouse effect," the Earth would be all but uninhabitable. But the increased concentration of these gases in the past century, which scientists tell us is mostly due to human activity, is warming things up a little bit too much. We have already begun to see the effects of human-caused global warming in altered growing seasons and rain patterns, increased severity and frequency of hurricanes and drought, shifts in ocean currents, and dying coral reefs. The effects of global warming affirm Thomas Berry's statement—the damage we have done to our earth community through emissions of global warming gases threatens our own existence.

Of all the global warming gases, carbon dioxide gets the most attention, in part because it's the largest part of the problem. But other gases, including methane, nitrous oxide and ozone all play a part in global warming—in fact, methane is 23 times more potent than carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere [[U.S. Climate Change Technology Program 2003 Report, pg. 21](#)]. Human activity such as burning fossil fuels, growing rice, raising livestock for meat and clearing forests by burning them account for 60 percent of methane emissions in our atmosphere.

Be Aware

For information and more links on greenhouse gases and global warming, visit the [ELCA's climate change Web site](#).

The majority of methane emissions regulated by federal guidelines involve mines and the oil and gas industry. But domestic cattle contribute 20 percent of U.S. methane emissions. The Environmental

Protection Agency has information on how the cattle industry can reduce methane emissions. Read their "Ruminant Livestock" fact sheet.

One promising option for reducing methane from cattle operations is to use it in generating electricity! Read an article in the [New York Times](#) about "cow power."

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