

Trees are essential for life on earth in so many ways, not least because their stature as plants serves as a potent and humbling reminder of the place of human kind in the scale of life on earth. Through careful management, trees can provide many essential resources. They yield considerably more food per hectare than arable crops. Importantly, trees help to guard against soil erosion, they add to soil fertility and they help regulate water supply. Trees produce oxygen through photosynthesis, the major forests across the globe are often referred to as the lungs of the planet and essentially they take atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> and store the carbon in their wood. The careful maintenance and extension of forests globally is an essential part of the battle to address global warming.

Private ownership of land would be discouraged within our communities, instead land would be held in trust by the communities themselves to meet the essential needs of all their members and to prevent the generation of profit and a means of subjugation and control by an elite few.

We cannot turn back the clock in terms of the technologies that have been invented by humans, but we would suggest that these should be selectively used to meet the needs of communities, rather than as means to control and diminish them. For example, the benefits of the internet as a tool for empowerment of ordinary people has been unprecedented. People can now communicate cheaply and freely around the globe, even in communities dominated by oppressive political regimes. They have also been able to access vast amounts of knowledge, helping them to educate and re-skill themselves and to spread awareness of campaigns to oppose and challenge suppression of humans and animals and to protect the environment. We need to ensure technology serves life and its use is governed by compassion and not the profit motives of a greedy few.

We hope this leaflet has given you food for thought and may encourage you to make some changes in the way you live your life.

For further information, please contact:

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## A Vision for a Compassionate World

The Movement for Compassionate Living is inspired by its vision for a just and compassionate world for all life on the planet based on a philosophy of ecological veganism. For us, compassionate living is about making connections between the way we live and others - people, animals, the whole living environment - suffer, as well as working for change in ourselves, our lifestyles and the world. It is essential that this vision is not based on unattainable ideals, our ideas need to be grounded in practical reality and be capable of being put into practice on a daily basis if we are to make changes happen and inspire other people to do the same. For us, being vegan is more than just about our dietary habits. Our vision inspires us to take steps in our own lives:

-  to decide what we choose to eat and how
-  to simplify the way we live
-  to influence the work we do
-  to determine how we interact with other people and work to influence them
-  to promote self-reliance

The present dominant world order of global capitalist imperialism is based on a system founded on an acceptance of runaway exploitation of people, other creatures and natural resources. The profound and appalling effects of wreaking such havoc on the very life support systems of the planet are desperately apparent in so many ways:

-  We teeter on the brink of dramatic climate change, brought about by a lack of respect for all life and resources and a failure to look to future sustainability while fuelling the greedy lifestyles of today.
-  We have exploited and destroyed amazing human cultures and civilisations by driving people from their natural lands, losing their innate knowledge of living in harmony with the Earth and encouraging them to aspire to unsustainable and unhealthy Western lifestyles, promoting disease and despondency in their communities.

**THE MOVEMENT for COMPASSIONATE LIVING**

🌐 The human race has abused animals in appalling ways, including intensive agricultural processes which have seen animal waste fed to naturally herbivorous creatures and intensive animal rearing in close confinement. We are now reaping the consequences as nature responds with unimagined diseases such as the manifestations of BSE (mad cow disease), virulent and deadly strains of avian flu and pathogens such as *E Coli*.



🌐 The brilliance of the human mind has been channelled into appalling and deadly technologies, such as weapons of mass destruction and genetic modification.

It sometimes seems that the damage already waged is too daunting, but in the face of such overwhelming odds we need to look for opportunities to plant seeds of hope for new ways of living and sustaining life on planet Earth.

One thing is absolutely clear: humans cannot continue to live on this planet without significant changes to the way they live. These changes could be truly life-affirming if based on principles of ecological veganism, where simple living could provide for people's needs in fulfilling ways, rather than compensating with a never-ending supply of unnecessary consumer goods.

Within MCL we aim to help people see that another way is easily within their reach. Though we are but one small movement globally we reflect a growing groundswell of opinion and action that is working to influence mainstream politics, economics and lifestyles to ensure another world is possible - by living it now!

We want to promote self-reliance in food and energy production, and in the application of practical and useful basic skills and crafts. We believe the natural way for people to live would be within small-scale village communities, where true democratic principles can be put into practice in everyday life, with group members sharing essential work and participating in decision-making through consensus. The aim would be to see a network of such self-reliant communities gradually developing across the globe, setting an example of peaceful, sustainable living based on vegan principles. The aim would be for communities of a sufficient size to bring together enough people to provide and share all essential skills, whilst remaining small enough

for each person to be known to each other and valued in their own right.

Local food production would be an important focus for these communities and the aim would be for each household to have access to enough land for the food they wish to produce and consume, whilst shared plots, such as for community orchards, nut tree plantations or grain production would also be needed and would provide people with the chance to work together and learn skills from each other. The aim would be for the freshest and most nutritious food to be provided for all with the shortest possible distance from spade to spoon. Fertility for food production would be achieved using vegan-organic methods of composting, using green manures, liquid plant-based feeds such as comfrey and nettle and use of other plants that add special fertility to the soil, such as seaweed. With appropriate treatment, some communities may also choose to use 'humanure' for soil fertility. All artificial chemical fertilisers, animal wastes and by-products would be avoided. Seeds for future crops would be saved and stored within each community as a safeguard for future food security, to maintain as wide a variety of choice of food crops as possible and as an ongoing bank of valuable genetic material that could be shared with other communities.

Wherever possible the work of the community, building homes and other buildings, working the soil and other cultivation techniques, making tools and other community needs would be met using hand tools and by sharing the skills and strength of community members working together. The energy needs of the community would be met by the cleanest small-scale energy systems possible. Harnessing solar, wind and water power in ways that meet the communities needs and blend into the local landscape. The construction of water and windmills as dual-purpose dwellings within the wider community could be a good way of re-integrating energy production into the normal day-to-day life of the community in an unobtrusive way. Heat would be provided from carefully managed coppiced woodland and used in the most efficient wood burning systems available. Indeed, carefully managed woodland and forest would sit at the heart of our model communities.

