ABSTRACT
The notion of stewardship, often connected with sustainable development, has become a favorite way for planners and policymakers to characterize an appropriate environmental ethic. The article traces the origins of the stewardship metaphor to its roots in Judeo-Christian tradition and contemporary theology, and suggests that the patriarchal and hierarchical connotations of stewardship might be of concern to some planners. Alternative environmental philosophies are described, and their implications for planning and policy are sketched.

RÉSUMÉ
Le concept de gestion responsable ("stewardship") souvent associé au développement viable, est un facteur privilégié par les urbanistes et les décideurs pour illustrer l'éthique environnementale. L'auteur retrace les origines de la métaphore de la gestion responsable dans la tradition judéo-chrétienne et dans la théologie contemporaine. Elle suggère que les connotations patriarcales et hiérarchiques qui portent ce concept pourraient intéresser les urbanistes. Elle décrit d'autres philosophies environnementales ainsi que leur signification pour l'urbanisme.

Introduction
As the many recent conferences and publications on the topic of planning for the environment illustrate, the future of professional planners will involve them deeply in environmental issues, and in making decisions with environmental-ethical implications. Therefore, it is imperative that planners be well informed not only about ecology, but also about the fertile and complex field of environmental philosophy.

That planners are beginning to reflect on environmental ethics is illustrated by the use of the notion of "stewardship" in current discourse. In recent planning literature, and in public policy statements, the term "stewardship" has become a commonplace expression of human responsibility respecting the environment.2 "Stewarding" the environment, it is argued or implied, is a morally admirable outlook superior to the exploitative, instrumental attitude to nature that has prevailed since the Enlightenment in both capitalist and Marxist societies. Examples are legion; here, a few will suffice:

☐ The "Environmental Policy Statement" of the Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corporation (a provincial crown corporation) concludes with the assertion that it will "Assume, in perpetuity, the environmental stewardship of wastes and residues placed in the Corporation’s custody."
☐ The Director of Environment, The World Bank, observes that "Issues of sovereignty and choice are central to the Bank’s borrowing countries regarding global pressures for enhanced environmental stewardship" (Piddington, 1989, p. 244).
☐ An address delivered to the World Environment, Energy and Economic Conference (Winnipeg, 1990) by the Rt. Hon. Edward Schreyer was entitled "Environmental Stewardship - An Emerging Imperative."
☐ The proceedings of a conference on riverbank management held in Winnipeg in 1989 are entitled Towards Stewardship of Winnipeg’s River Corridors (Mathur and Beavis, 1990).
☐ A recent Plan Canada article defines as "stewardship" the responsibility of governments "to prepare visionary plans; mobilize support, participation and funds; co-ordinate; mediate; educate, and undertake conservation projects" (Mathur, 1989, p. 44).
☐ Another article in this journal (Van Patter and Hiltz, 1990) speaks of voluntary stewardship of natural heritage properties as an innovative strategy being pioneered in Southern Ontario (Natural Heritage Stewardship Program, Natural Heritage Stewardship Award).

Stewardship, apparently, is well on its way to becoming the "politically correct" environmental ethic for Canadian planners and policymakers. Two personal anecdotes will further illustrate this trend. First, during the editing of a Plan Canada article, the author asked me (the Assistant Editor) to change the word "management" to "stewardship" wherever it occurred, because stewardship was the new buzzword in conservation planning. Second, at a seminar on the ethics of...
sustainable development and urbaniza-

tion which I co-ordinated at the Univer-
sity of Winnipeg in 1989, one of the participants told the presenter that even-
ing that he (the participant) didn’t un-
derstand the notion of stewardship but
was ‘religious,’ and he wasn’t.

This agnostic’s suspicion that there is some-thing ‘religious’ about the notion of
stewardship is borne out not only in
the course on religion and the environment.

For example, Robert J. Moore of the
Canadian Religion and Development
Agency (CIDA) remarks in an article en-
titled ‘A New Christian Reformation’ that:

‘In the light of more mature under-

standing of the meaning of creation, the
powers given humankind are not those of a
sovereign but of a steward. And if it is true
that Genesis states, in the image of God,
then our exploitative, battering, and polluting
defilement is a corruption of our
own status and an affront to the
Holy Spirit. As stewards of creation,
human beings have a special position
within it. But the basis of that position
is the fact that through us the universe
reflects and expresses, and its Creator.
Consciousness is the aspect of the
Deity that we possess. It confers meanings
— powers that should be used to
create a balanced relationship between ourselves and nature (Moore, 1990, p. 107).

David Hallman, who served for five
years with a national committee of the
United Church of Canada responsible
for issues related to energy and the
environment (but not only to stewardship
issues) observed that:

‘An image in the Bible of the relation-

ship between humanity and the
rest of creation deserves a lot more
attention than it has received — the
image of stewards. As stewards and
ecologists may be regarded as
— critical is the stewardship model of
environmental responsibility. I myself suspect that some plan-
ers might also be wary of the term
if they knew more about its
genealogy.’

This paper will briefly investigate the
origins of the stewardship metaphor in
Western culture, and discuss the possi-
ble reasons for its appeal, especially to
ecologists, philanthropic citizens, and
civil servants. It will be argued that, far from being a
refreshing new perspective on environ-
mental issues, ‘stewardship’ is a con-
 servative ethic which fits well into
temporal political and corporate world
views. Alternative models of environ-
mental ethics will be introduced as alter-
natives to the stewardship/sustainable
development paradigm.

A Brief History of Stewardship

The terms steward and stewardship
translate the Greek terms oikonomia and
omokonia. These words are related to
the root oikos (house/house-
hold), which, as a component of property and
wealth, had connotations of development
delight in pointing out, lies
behind the English words economy and
management. Although the image of stewardship to foster a system of
self-support through voluntary giving (‘Charity’; Luke 6:30), in the nineteenth
century, the managerial sense of the
term has endured, and become a stand-
ard way of describing the appropriate
attitude to administering the financial af-
fairs of ‘mainline’ Protestant churches.
However, in recent decades, the finan-
cial/administrative interpretation has
been criticized for being too narrow,
and the meaning of stewardship has been
extended into virtually every area of hu-
man life and experience, e.g., steward-
ship of time and talent, of mission, of
the gospel, of social responsibilities, and
its fulfilment (I) etc. According to R.B.
Cunningham (1979, pp. 20-21), stewardship is ‘a model for creative liv-
ing above all other concepts that
I am responsible for and representative of the
other! As stewards of them, let us say’ (1982, p. 106).

The concept of stewardship as a
model for creative living is a popular
theme in the teaching of the New Testa-
ment. The New Testament sees them as
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Critical Issues of the Environmental
Stewardship Model: Deep Ecology
and Ecosophy

Deep ecology and ecosophy are two
approaches to issues of environmental ethics
which reject anthropocentric (or
‘man-centred’) understanding of the
natural world (p. 123). The current jargon of sustainable develop-
ment, popularized by the report of the
Brundtland Commission (1987), is very
similar to the RCD understanding of envi-
ronmental stewardship deployed by the
new green capitalism.

E. F. Roop (1989) has pointed out (as an observed earlier) that the metaphor of stewards is an essentially hierarchical
( and, it should be added, patriarchal)
understanding of society. He remarks:

‘By using that image from a hierarchi-
cal perspective, the idea of a God-
human-world relationship, we influ-
ce both our theological and catechetical
guide in a way that supports a hierarchi-
cal portrayal of relationships, we may be
writing "hierarchy" on the human spirit and generating actions and organiz-
ing maneuvered by that language (p. 145). Roop goes on to cite the feminist

sight that we must find "different, non-patriarchal, hierarchical roots of bib-

in which "meanings" increasingly intervene in nature to bring out earth's potentials, to be both arrogant and seductive in the dictionary and in the

Mary Daly (1984) imagines borrowed from the rigidly structured.

Ecofeminism

Social Ecology

A starting point for planners and policymakers for whom sustainable deep ecology, for example, would a city shaped by some of the principles articulated above, e.g., Davis and Venn 1997. A step in this direction would be to sup-

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Terrestrial to Psychological

"tolerance" to exteriority and the environment, an ethic based on a model

regionalism are: a emphasis on living in the community (eco-

environmental thought is provided in Table 1.

Alternatives for Planners

"natural resource management". Some advocates of bioregionalism have ad-

valuing co-operation and consen-

In the 1980s, a perspective characterized by some advocates (Pye, 1989; Plant, 1989; Col-

Additional recognition of the interplay between human and nature (deep ecology, ecofeminism)

A step in this direction would be to sup-

The concept of ecological restoration is discussed in the article. However, the specific details or implications of this concept are not elaborated upon in the text provided.

Biorationalism

The concept of biorationalism is introduced. It is described as promoting a view that is harmonious with the ecologies and cultures of different localities (Erg, 1996; An-

Awareness of the problem of "species-

valuing co-operation and consensus builds on a foundation of competition and co-operation (ecofeminism, deep ecology, bioregionalism, social ecology).

Local self-sufficiency (as opposed to self-sufficiency) (bioregionalism) is also mentioned as an alternative for planners. The text suggests that while planners have already been trained to address the "alternative" through technical and regional planning initiatives. For example, the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront (1996) has taken an explicitly bioregional stance (pp. 21-45). The Commission's Waterfront report makes 80 recommendations towards a "clean, green, useable, diverse, open, accessible, connected" future, with the intention of providing the "Greater Toronto Bioregion." It remains to be seen whether these recommendations will be acted upon, but the high profile of the Royal Commission, and the approval it has received from environ-

mentalists, indicate that it is possible for planners to move "beyond sustain-

able development" to a more profound ecological model of planning.

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able development" to a more profound ecological model of planning.
national or transnational corporate interests. Local materials and produce would be preferred to imports. Biological/eco-
logical principles would inform the design of buildings and settlements (see Todd and Todd, 1984; Ideas, Part 2, 1990, pp. 7-9). City size would be limited in order to preserve agricultural land and wilder-
ness areas. Reuse of developed urban areas (inner city and older suburbs) would be preferred to peripheral devel-
opment. The same water source would supply the city's drinking and sewage needs, water would be required to leave the city limits as clean as when it entered. Local rivers and streams would be kept clean enough for drinking and swimming. Recycling programs would drastically reduce the amount of waste landfilled or incinerated; hazardous wastes would be minimized. Community participation in planning and policymaking would be foregrounded. Some readers might argue that the "ecocitizen" vision sketched above would be impossible to actualize. However, virtually all of the elements of this vision have been implemented, on a small scale, at least, in communities around the world.

**TABLE 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Managers (RCO), Sustainable Development Stewardship</th>
<th>Traditional Economic Development</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Belief that economic growth and resource exploitation can be contin-
| ued, assuming suitable economic adjustments to taxes, fees, etc., in-
| to the legal rights in the territorial span of control (carrying capa-
| bilities) | Belief that human beings can al-
| ways find a way out of any difficulties either political, scientific or tech-
| nological |

**Ecological (and other natural) norms condition human morality. Human beings as part of nature.** Integration of concepts of work and leisure through a process of natural and community improvement. Technology is informed by biological/ecological principles and processes. Lack of faith in modern large-scale technology and its associated demands on elitist expertise, central state authority and inherently antidemocratic institutions.

**Implication that materialism for its own sake is wrong and that economic growth can be geared to providing for the basic needs of those below subsistence levels.**


**yields of food and other resources from its hinterland** without long-term environ-
mental degradation” (White and Whitney, 1985, p. 6). In other words, until very recently in human history, settlements that depended on their bioregional limits were the norm.

**Concluding Remarks**

An "old" interpretation here has not been to decree an environmental philosophy for planners, but to point out that a specific environmental ethic, steward-
ship (along with its more technical cousin, sustainable development), has been widely, and often uncritically, em-
braced by planners and policymakers. My aim has also been to suggest some (not necessarily mutually exclusive) chal-
enging alternatives to this "shallow" envi-
ronmental ethic, and, more broadly, to show that an analysis of the cultural history behind a seemingly innocuous notion like "stewardship" can lead plan-
ners to a deeper, more sensitive and more sophisticated approach to planning. Planning practitioners and academics will, of course, be able to add greatly to my modest suggestions, and, I hope, help to operationalize some of the envi-
ronmental and ethical ideas introduced here.

**Notes**

1. Parts of the paper were presented to the Biblical and Political Studies of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies (Kinston, Ontario, May 28, 1991).

2. For a recent history of stewardship is also creeping into other areas of planning dis-
course, e.g., the CIP's "Blueprint" for the CAP (see Secretariat 1988-1992). The CIP's Blueprint (1988) is a "play on words" that is intended to invoke "stewardship," a word that has been used to describe the way of life of the early church (see Whitaker, 1992). For a recent history of stewardship is also creeping into other areas of planning dis-
course, e.g., the CIP's "Blueprint" for the CAP (see Secretariat 1988-1992).


4. Some of the history of stewardship in the Bible can be found in a number of recent works on the subject, including Stewardship, Stewardship (1987), "The identification of certain values with the various ecotheologies that follows does not imply that other environmental perspec-
tives do not share similar values. Rather, the lan-
ding indicates the characteristic emphases of deep ecotheology, ecofeminism, bioregionalism and social ecology.

5. Carolyn Merchant (1980, pp. 246-51) points out that in the 18th century, the English ecologist William Darrell observed that the idea of progress in terms of the human stew-
dardship over the whole natural world: "The idea that human beings are the stewards of the world, that we have been given superior animal or superior intelligence, that we have been given in his image as caretakers and stewards on earth. In conclusion, he cited Matthew 25:14: "That these things are the gifts of God, they are so many talents en-
tusted with us by the infinite Lord of the word, a stewardship, a trust reposed in us; for which we must give an account at the day when our Lord shall call" (p. 249). This man-
agerial model of human responsibility to God for the management of nature is very similar to the modern notion of sustainable develop-
ment: "Growth and trade must not be halted due to the depletion of resources; we should nurture the environment for short-term gain, but it could be used wisely and understood ra-
tionally, nature's abundance would not be exhausted."

6. These topics are taken from various arti-

7. The title of Collard and Contrucci's book, Rape of the Wolf, Man's Violence against Animals and the Earth (the non-inclusive lan-
guage is intentional) seems to be a play on David Hall (1982, p. 17) wistfully observes that there are no women stewards in the bible — "we do not hear of female stewards here, alas!" Of course, women certainly functioned in "stewardly" capacities in antiquity (there are plenty of female "household managers," often slaves, in ancient literature) that would be impossible to actualize. However, virtually all of the elements of this vision have been implemented, on a small scale, at least, in communities around the world. It is important to remember that, prior to the industrial revolution, "systems of cities (exists) ... whose size and spacing depended on the pre-industrial territorial span of control (carrying capabilities) region or hinterland and its techno-
logy and political ability to increase...


Sanctuary: A New World View.


