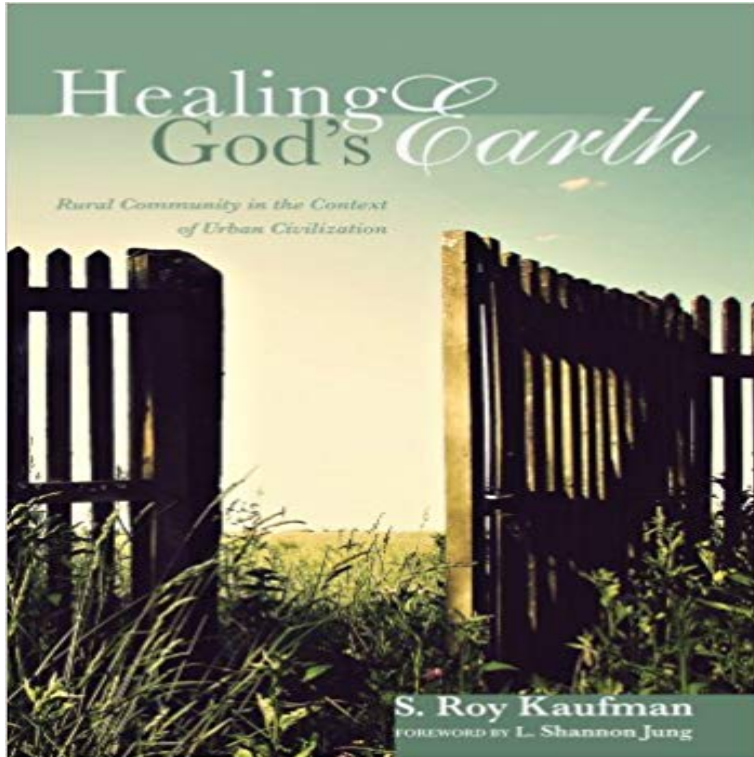


# Healing Gods Earth: Rural Community in the Context of Urban Civilization



Rural communities and traditional cultures throughout North America and around the world are being systematically dismantled by the forces of urban civilization. It is no new phenomenon. For over four millennia, the powers of urban civilization have been playing God, oppressing people, and exploiting the earth. This long history has brought us to the brink of disaster in the current economic, ecological, and energy crises confronting the dominant global culture. This book reads the Bible through the lenses of rural communities. The Bible has something to say about the origin and character of urban civilization and the dynamic of its relationship to rural communities. Both Israel in the Old Testament and Jesus in the New Testament were engaged in the formation of rural communities of faith living as alternatives to the dominant cultures of the urban civilizations in which they lived. It turns out that local, face-to-face communities, both rural and urban, along with traditional cultures of all stripes, are Gods chosen instruments for the subversive, nonviolent disarming of urban civilization and the healing of Gods earth. Healing Gods Earth makes an important contribution to our task of caring for creation. S. Roy Kaufman writes out of a specific Christian tradition (Mennonite), vocation (pastor), and social context (farming community) and in doing so articulates an applied biblical theology that speaks to all Christians. Though Kaufmans critique of civilization is sharp, he gives far more with his life-affirming vision of shalom based on a careful interrogation of both Testaments. Ted Grimsrud, author of *Instead of Atonement* A beautiful capstone on the career of a faithful rural pastor, *Healing Gods Earth* retells the biblical narrative championing the rural struggle for faithful witness to Gods hope for the world against the backdrop of urban dominion. As a corrective to fixations on urban ministry,

Kaufman ignites a necessary conversation that helps rural and urban dwellers alike to grasp the importance of faithfully subversive face-to-face communities as Gods chosen agents of mission in the world. David Boshart, Executive Conference Minister, Central Plains Mennonite Conference Out of the midst of our global, technocratic, and urbanizing civilization, S. Roy Kaufman issues a clarion call to local, incarnational, alternative community. Healing Gods Earth is an insightful and incisive work of prophetic and pastoral biblical theology rooted in the Anabaptist Mennonite narrative. It is also an essential text for people of Christian faith and for all people everywhere as creation waits with eager longing to be set free from its bondage to degradation. Matthew Yoder, Pastor, Menno Mennonite Church Growing up in a rural community, and serving four rural congregations in Iowa, Illinois, Saskatchewan, and South Dakota over nearly four decades as a pastor of Mennonite Church USA and Canada, S. Roy Kaufman personally witnessed the dismantling and disintegration of rural communities and churches. This book is a distillation of forty years of living, preaching, and teaching with these rural congregations. Kaufman lives in his home community, Freeman, South Dakota.

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