

Finding Faith in Agroecology

Agroecology and nature connection in the Dominican community of Zwolle



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“If you want to build a ship, don’t drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea.”

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Le Petit Prince

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Abbreviations

DMZ: Dominican Monastery of Zwolle
DCZ: Dominican Community in Zwolle
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organisation
PEB: Pro-environmental behaviour

Front page photo taken in the Dominican monastery Zwolle on 9 September 2021 by Junya Nakasugi

Executive summary

The Dominican monastery of Zwolle is in a transition phase for the role its order plays in the local community of Zwolle. Our academic consultancy team was asked to investigate engagement with agroecological practices within the Zwolle Dominican community. The Dominican monastery of Zwolle aims to reconnect people in Zwolle with nature and promote agroecological practices. Furthermore, the Dominican monastery of Zwolle wants to reinforce a sense of togetherness in their faith community by promoting practices that connect their Dominican values with nature.

We identified a lack of knowledge in the connection between Dominican values and agroecological practices. In this research we aimed to fill or at least decrease this knowledge gap by exploring existing agroecological practices and people's perception of nature through these practices. The conceptual framework forming the underlying basis of this study is centered on theories of *human-nature connectedness* and the concept of *radical relationality*. For our research we used the following definition of agroecology: "Agroecology is an ecological way of food production where the services provided by the interactions of humans, plants and animals are utilised without damaging them. The principles of agroecology also ensure that farmers get a fair price and food is shared equally so it does not get wasted."

We formulated the main research question as follows: *What agroecological practices can be used to enhance the connection between the values of the Zwolle Dominican community and their engagement in agroecology in the long term?*

The methodologies used were semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire. Five people were interviewed; two monks from the Dominican monastery of Zwolle, two farmers that are part of the Dominican community of Zwolle and one community member.

In response to our main research question and based on our study, we gave recommendations to the Dominican monastery of Zwolle for improving human-nature connectedness by using the values of communication, knowledge sharing, gratitude and contemplation as guidelines. Additionally, we recommended two agroecological practices that can be practiced on a small scale but enhance the connection between the values of the Zwolle Dominican community and their engagement in agroecology in the long term.

Samenvatting

Het Dominicanenklooster in Zwolle bevindt zich in een overgangsfase wat betreft de rol die haar orde speelt in de lokale gemeenschap. Ons academisch adviesteam is gevraagd om onderzoek te doen naar de betrokkenheid van de Zwolse Dominicaanse gemeenschap bij agro-ecologische praktijken. Het Dominicanenklooster van Zwolle wil de Zwollenaren weer in contact brengen met de natuur en agro-ecologische praktijken bevorderen. Bovendien wil het klooster het gevoel van saamhorigheid binnen hun geloofsgemeenschap versterken door praktijken te promoten die hun Dominicaanse waarden verbinden met de natuur.

We stelden vast dat er een gebrek is aan kennis over het verband tussen Dominicaanse waarden en agro-ecologische praktijken. In dit onderzoek hebben we een poging gedaan deze kenniskloof te dichten door bestaande agro-ecologische praktijken en de perceptie van de natuur door deze praktijken te onderzoeken. Het conceptuele raamwerk dat de basis vormt van dit onderzoek is gebaseerd op theorieën van mens-natuur verbondenheid en het concept van radicale relationaliteit.

Voor ons onderzoek gebruikten we de volgende definitie van agro-ecologie: "Agro-ecologie is een ecologische manier van voedselproductie waarbij de diensten die geleverd worden door de samenwerking van mens, plant en dier benut worden zonder ze te beschadigen. De principes van agro-ecologie zorgen er ook voor dat boeren een eerlijke prijs krijgen en dat voedsel gelijk gedeeld wordt zodat het niet verspild wordt."

We formuleerden de hoofdonderzoeksvraag als volgt: *Welke agro-ecologische praktijken kunnen gebruikt worden om de verbinding tussen de waarden van de Zwolse Dominicaanse gemeenschap en hun betrokkenheid bij agro-ecologie op lange termijn te versterken?*

De gebruikte methodologieën waren semi-gestructureerde interviews en een vragenlijst. Vijf mensen werden geïnterviewd; twee broeders van het Dominicanenklooster in Zwolle, twee boeren die deel uitmaken van de Dominicaanse gemeenschap in Zwolle en één lid van de gemeenschap.

In antwoord op onze hoofdonderzoeksvraag en op basis van ons onderzoek gaven we aanbevelingen aan het Dominicaanse klooster van Zwolle voor het verbeteren van de verbondenheid tussen mens en natuur. Hiervoor gebruikten we de waarden communicatie, kennisdeling, dankbaarheid en contemplatie als leidraad. Daarnaast hebben we twee kleinschalig agro-ecologische praktijken aanbevolen die de verbinding kunnen verbeteren tussen de waarden van de Zwolse Dominicaanse gemeenschap en hun betrokkenheid bij agro-ecologie op de lange termijn.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Context

The Dominican monastery in Zwolle (DMZ) recently submitted an enquiry to the Science Shop of Wageningen University & Research, asking for a team to investigate engagement with agroecological practices in the Zwolle area and specifically within the Zwolle Dominican community. The industrialisation of agriculture detached citizens from the sense-giving aspects of farming, such as being aware of the attention and care towards the land and the plants that are feeding us. Now, the DMZ aims to reconnect people in Zwolle with nature and promote agroecological practices. This ACT project is part of the aforementioned Science Shop's collaborative research with DMZ. It is therefore a follow-up of the work of the first ACT team to engage with this project, which took place in May 2021.

The DMZ is in a transition phase in the role they play in the local community. In the past, Dutch monasteries played a predominant role in society. However, the influence of monasteries on the lives of individual citizens gradually declined during the secularisation process in modern society. One of the ways in which monasteries can reinvent themselves and reintegrate their existence into contemporary society is by engaging with the current transition towards a greener society. Further, the DMZ wants to reinforce a sense of togetherness in their faith community by promoting practices that connect their Dominican values with nature.

The DMZ has been trying to make pro-environmental principles a more essential element of their belief system. For example, DMZ is already part of "Groene Kerk" (Green church), a national federation of religious communities who aim to take concrete steps towards sustainability by sharing information. Now, by encouraging people to internalise these principles into their daily practices, the DMZ wants to contribute to the ongoing dialogues about climate change and to increase awareness of sustainable food production and consumption. The DMZ has around 1500 members (in this paper referred to as the DCZ). Each week, ceremonies are held, and many other activities are organised to stimulate togetherness within the community. Father Jan Laan, spiritual leader Kitty Nijboer, and coordinator Elsa Eikema (below referred to as "monastery representatives") recognise the importance of incorporating environmentally friendly activities into their daily life and want to play a role in this field by motivating their community to do the same.

To support the transition goals of the DMZ, Father Godfrey Nzamujo will visit Zwolle in November 2021. Godfrey Nzamujo is a Dominican priest who started an agroecological farm, known as the Songhai project, at his monastery in Benin. Whilst in Zwolle, he will deliver lectures and sermons in which he facilitates dialogues within the faith community on how to internalise pro-environmental practices into their faith systems. The monastery is now seeking ways to provide follow-ups to Father Godfrey's visit in order to maximise the impact it will have on the wider Dominican community in Zwolle. They have already set up a working group to organise a series of lectures on Father Godfrey's Zero-waste Farming project, but are still looking for means of promoting long-term engagement

In the original project assignment, we were asked to look into the different roles of other Dutch Christian communities in moving from industrialised agriculture to more ecologically oriented food production. However, based on the communication with the monastery representatives, we decided to shift our research focus to investigate how the DMZ can internalise pro-environmental behaviour into their belief system by encouraging agroecological practices in the community.

1.2. Problem statement and project purpose

As discussed in the previous section, the lack of knowledge was identified in the connection between Dominican values and agroecological practices. Therefore, in this research we aim to fill, or at least decrease, this knowledge gap by exploring existing agroecological practices and people's perception of nature through these practices that can potentially bring human-nature connectedness and awareness to ongoing environmental issues into the Dominican community in Zwolle.

The purpose of this project is to find out the connection between Dominican values and agroecological practices in order to see how this connection can be used to evoke a desire to engage in agroecological practices within the Zwolle Dominican community. In the long term, the monastery can refer to this research to help the community recognise their spirituality in agroecology, by highlighting aspects of specific agroecological practices that they could relate to and recognise their faith in. We took advantage of our team's interdisciplinarity by combining our scientific and practical knowledge on (agro)ecology with an anthropological understanding of human-nature connectedness and the need to motivate people beyond rational reasoning. To understand how to evoke a desire to practice agroecology, we explored the ways in which Dominican values relate to human-nature connectedness and ecology. We utilised our knowledge of agroecological practices to see where the Dominican teachings are reflected within agroecology. Finally, with the outcome of our project, we aimed to enhance the process of bringing this connection to the monastery community in a way that promotes long-term engagement with agroecological practices. Regarding the ethical implications of our study, we are positive that the input that we will provide to the monastery representatives will be used ethically and wisely. We did reflect on our positionality as researchers reaching out to the community inquiring about pro-environmental behaviours and agroecological practices: we have been putting a lot of attention in representing thoroughly the needs of the external commissioners, trying to fully respect what they set out to be as a fruitful investigation in the community of which they are part. Much care was taken not to impose our own views and understandings of the topics covered, neither with regard to our contacts with the respondents and interviewees, nor in the formulation and distribution of the questionnaires. We tried to conduct ethical and weighted research, being aware of the near impossibility of conducting an objective one.

1.3. State of the art

In May 2021, the first ACT team conducted exploratory research on agroecological practices of different monasteries in the Netherlands. In this research, the team interviewed 7 monasteries to map out which practices they are engaged with. In their final report, the ACT team scored these practices on the basis of three pillars -- (1) agroecology; (2) connection; and (3) collaboration (ACT-team 2653, 2021). According to these scores, the final report

provides advice for the DMZ. First, regarding agroecology, examples from other monasteries show that laying out a permaculture garden could promote awareness of biodiversity preservation while taking account of agroecological principles by FAO (FAO, 2018). The report also identifies circular food initiatives as an inspiring example of agroecological practices that could effectively be incorporated into the DMZ. Second, the report advises the DMZ to be more outward-looking and to actively seek contact with the local community. A monastery located in an urban area is seen as an inspiring example regarding its openness and commitment to the local community. Third, collaboration with other religious orders is crucial to share knowledge and learn from each other. For this, a monastery organising various external events with other religious communities is introduced in the final report as an insightful example. On top of that, the first ACT team provided contact information of a monastic community that is willing to get in touch with the DMZ to work together on agroecology and become a source of inspiration.

2. Conceptual framework

2.1. Human-nature connectedness

The conceptual framework forming the underlying basis of this study is centered on theories of *human-nature connectedness* and the concept of *radical relationality*. Nature-connectedness, or nature-relatedness, is a means of describing and comparing people's sense of connection to non-human nature (Martin et al. 2020). Although an individual's own perception of their nature-connectedness is highly subjective, many academics have attempted to quantify it through the creation of scales such as the Inclusion of Nature in Self Scale and the Connectedness to Nature Scale (CNS) (Martin et al., 2020). Measures such as these assess nature-connectedness by asking respondents the extent to which they, for example, see humans and non-human nature as interdependent, respect nature, feel responsible for caring for nature, and feel "at one" in nature (Chawla, 2020). Recent studies on the factors influencing engagement with pro-environmental behaviours (PEBs) have found that engagement with PEBs, such as agroecological practices, can be promoted by increasing human-nature connectedness. (Whitburn et al., 2019; Martin et al., 2020; Richardson et al., 2020). This is especially true when attempting to inspire long-term, rather than short-term, sustainable practices (Riechers et al., 2021), perhaps due to the importance of recognising the interrelatedness of humans and nature in the formation of an '*ecological consciousness*' (Miroshkin, 2019).

Forming an ecological consciousness means changing one's psyche toward a consciousness that values the preservation and restoration of nature, harmony between humans and non-human nature, and a deep recognition of the interconnectedness of humans and non-human nature (Biriukova, 2005; Miroshkin, 2019). To 'green' the consciousness of a community, many academics stress the importance of shifting people's ethics from anthropocentric (centered on the needs and desires of humans and emphasizing human dominion over non-human nature) to biocentric (perceiving humans as equal members of the wider natural community) (Gudmanian, 2020), again highlighting the need to reconnect people with nature.

Radical relationality is another concept related to the interconnectedness of humans and non-human nature, though primarily stresses the importance of deconstructing socially-constructed dualisms (such as the divide between man and nature) and instead focussing on how social connections and values are formed through relations (Powell, 2013). The principle of radical relationality dictates that we do not have relations with the things around us in our world, we are relations (Morry & Kito, 2009): an interdependent way of existence, reflected in both the vision of the Dominican faith and the practice of agroecology. Values are understood here as the core principles (Stalhammer & Thoren, 2018) guiding an individual's actions, choices, and desires.

The importance of collectively moving beyond an anthropocentric consciousness is echoed in the *deep ecology* movement. Deep ecologists attribute ecological devastation to the western psychological and spiritual understanding of non-human nature which has resulted in our perceived separation from, and subsequent exploitation of, other forms of life (Seed, 2006). As a result, ecology and spirituality are seen as highly connected; environmental problems, and therefore their solutions, are rooted in philosophy and spirituality (Theokritoff, 2017). Deep agroecology has been described as "spiritually intelligent agriculture" (Zollet, 2021), which

opens up new ways of thinking about nature through the lens of religious or spiritual values. The practice of ‘caring for the land with love’ (Botelho et al., 2015), for example, creates an emotional attachment to nature that evokes greater compassion for all forms of life. When people connect to nature on an emotional, spiritual, or philosophical level, this connection and resulting behavioural changes are more likely to be maintained in the long term (Ives et al., 2018). Teachings found in religions such as Christianity can be interpreted in a way that evokes this type of connection and promotes PEBs (Kalamas et al., 2014), as can religious practices such as contemplation and mindfulness (Ives et al., 2018).

Investigating the relationship between human-nature connectedness and PEB greatly influenced our understanding of how to motivate the DCZ to engage with agroecology. We decided to focus on how nature-connectedness can be enhanced through both agroecological and religious values, and how these values can thus be used to evoke a long-term desire to engage with agroecology. Five ‘dimensions’ of human-nature connectedness have been identified: material, experiential, cognitive, emotional, and philosophical (Muhr, 2020), many of which are intangible and therefore difficult to understand how to evoke within people. As previously explained, there are strong links between the emotional and philosophical dimensions of human-nature connectedness and spirituality, as both often require the presence of social relational emotions (Petersen et al., 2019) such as love, compassion, empathy, and gratitude.

The vision of the Dominican community therefore already lends itself as a starting point for helping the community connect to agroecology. Academic literature on reconnecting with nature for promoting PEB has also noted the importance of engaging with ‘human biophilic values’, such as contact, emotion, meaning, compassion and beauty (Charles et al. 2018), for promoting nature-connectedness, instead of just logic and scientific understanding. As commissioner Kitty Nijboer phrased it, the motivation must come ‘from within’ (personal communication, Kitty Nijboer, September 3 2021).

With this framework in mind, we concluded that it would not be effective to reach out to the DCZ by explaining to them the science behind why they should be engaging with agroecology, or providing them with logical written texts on how their religious values are connected to agroecological practices. As Seed (2006) writes: “The ideas of interconnectedness and participation may remain, but in the absence of the experience they are sterile”. The concepts outlined in this framework, namely reconnecting with nature and transforming ecological consciousness, have been found to be achieved effectively in the long term through engagement with art (York, 2014), stories (Hsu, 2003), and group workshop practices such as guided meditation (Macy, 1998) and cultural ceremonies (Seed, 2006). These mediums appeal to people’s emotions, and are thus much more likely to evoke deep connections and shifts in psychology.

During the early stages of our investigation, external commissioner Kitty Nijboer noted the need for the DCZ to feel a deep desire to engage with agroecology, rather than do it because they feel like they ‘should’ (personal communication, Kitty Nijboer, September 3 2021). To illustrate this, she quoted *Le Petit Prince*: “If you want to build a ship, don’t drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea.” (de Saint-Exupéry, 1986). The sentiment that this communicates is echoed by the findings of our literature analysis, and reaffirms our conceptual focus.

2.2. Agroecology

Agroecological approaches have been receiving increased attention in scientific, agricultural, and apolitical discourses in recent years. These approaches suggest ways in which we can transform current food production systems in order to mitigate environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity (Wezel et.al., 2014). Further, adopting agroecological methods of food production can address socio-economic challenges caused by conventional and industrial methods of food production, such as persistent malnutrition, rural poverty, and obesity triggered by unbalanced dietary habits (Wezel et. al., 2020).

Corresponding to the increasing interest in agroecology, numerous different definitions and interpretations of the concept are currently available. For instance, FAO (2018) describes agroecology as: “an integrated approach that simultaneously applies ecological and social concepts and principles to the design and management of food and agricultural systems. It seeks to optimize the interactions between plants, animals, humans and the environment while taking into consideration the social aspects that need to be addressed for a sustainable and fair food system” (FAO, 2018, p.1). In the last part of this definition, emphasis is put on the optimization of the interaction between plants, animals, humans, and the environment. In this sense, humans can be seen as a part of the ecosystem. This differs from the traditional interpretation where humans were seen as separated from the ecosystem (Wezel et. al., 2020). This has been causing confusion in the discussions revolving around the definition of agroecology.

Historically, agroecology as a concept followed several evolutionary stages. The scope of the definition has expanded from the field, farm and agroecosystem strata to encompass the whole food system (Wezel et. al., 2009). The expansion of the scope also led to the recognition of different manifestations of agroecology: agroecology as a science, as a practice, and as a social movement. These manifestations are reflected in an increasing number and diversity of agroecological principles. In sum, the latest interpretations of agroecology tend to be associated with a set of principles for the ecological management of food production systems, as well as some wider ranging socio-economic, cultural and political principles (Wezel et. al., 2020). In this project, we take into account this multi-dimensional and stratified nature of agroecology.

Nevertheless, to avoid the confusion caused by different interpretations of agroecology among informants, and to make it more easily understandable by lay people, we generated our definition of the concept for the questionnaires as follows, “Agroecology is an ecological way of food production where the services provided by the interactions of humans, plants and animals are utilised without damaging them. The principles of agroecology also ensure that farmers get a fair price and food is shared equally so it does not get wasted”. This definition was formulated based on the result of a comprehensive literature review conducted by Wezel et al. (2014). It was translated to Dutch by us and included in the questionnaire.

3. Research design

3.1. Research questions

As discussed in the introduction, The purpose of this project is to find out the connection between Dominican values and agroecological practices in order to see how this

connection can be used to evoke a desire to engage in agroecological practices within the Zwolle Dominican community. To fill or at least decrease this knowledge gap, we formulated the main research question as follows:

What agroecological practices can be used to enhance the connection between the values of the Zwolle Dominican community and their engagement in agroecology in the long term?

From the main question, the following four sub questions were raised:

1. *What values within the Dominican community of Zwolle can be connected to agroecology?*
2. *What agroecological practices do people within the Dominican community of Zwolle engage in?*
3. *Why are members of the Dominican community of Zwolle engaging with agroecological practices and to what extent is this related to their faith?*
4. *What agroecological practices can evoke a long-term connection between the Dominican faith and agroecology?*

3.2. Methods

In this section our aim is to analyse our methodological choices and the process we went through when collecting data. Our findings are based on data collected through semi-structured and online interviews and a questionnaire shared with the community both physically and digitally. We carefully inspected this data through the theoretical lenses stated above, and it has yielded useful information for answering the research questions of this study.

3.2.1. Semi-structured interviews

Interviews have been a substantial part of our data gathering process. During these interviews, the team explored the different ways in which the representatives of the monastery community engaged with topics such as agroecology and human-nature connectivity. We also sought to investigate the interviewees' various personal understandings of how faith and spirituality interact with nature.

Three different interview guides (Appendix 3) have been prepared for these interviews, according to the target population (Bernard, 2013): monks living in the DMZ, agroecological farmers in the DCZ, and a member of the DCZ who are engaging with agroecological practices but are not farmers. We decided to interview people who are already engaging with agroecological practices to uncover the connection between the values of the DCZ and agroecological practices. In doing so, we hoped to gather useful suggestions on how their experiences could evoke a desire to engage with such practices. These interviews are

especially aimed at gaining useful insights into sub-questions 1 and 3. The interview guides that the team followed during these interviews can be found in Appendix 3, together with a standard verbatim transcription for each interview. We developed three interview guides tailored to different informant groups (monks, farmers, and community members). Each interview guide was created based on the framework described in the instruction material provided by the ACT coordinator. Following this document, we first created interview blueprints where a couple of objectives were generated from research questions. These objectives served as goals we wanted to reach in the interviews with a particular group of people (monks, farmers, and community members). From these objectives, topics were created in order for us to pinpoint what we want to ask through interview questions.

Non-probability sampling methods were used to identify the interviewees, namely snowball sampling and respondent driven sampling (Bernard, 2013). Relying on the social network of the community has been beneficial, so much so that all interviewees were found through respondent driven sampling, going from the monks themselves, to people attending services, to representatives of the Green Church initiative. This choice has proven to be the most effective in gathering detailed and in-depth information useful in answering our research questions. Thanks to this choice, different stances on the topic of our inquiry were registered and assimilated by the research team, thus building a more nuanced understanding on how community representatives perceive the subjects of this study.

The decision to conduct semi-structured interviews has also been beneficial, as this enabled the research team members to digress from the interview guides when they believed useful information could be gathered by digging deeper into certain topics. The interviewees were more prone to talk freely about the most various matters, and the semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for further exploration of this. After the first interviews, the interviewers' ability to conduct interviews has improved considerably, along with their ability to follow or not follow previously prepared guides. This flexibility resulted in us gathering more ad-hoc information, which proved useful in answering our research questions and presenting relevant results to our commissioners.

During the interviews the team had a clear role division: one person was actively conducting the interview posing questions, one person was making sure to record the interview after explicit consent and making sure all questions were dealt with sufficiently within the set time, and one person was manually taking notes. The recordings of the interviews were then listened to and manually transcribed on a Word document.

Interview transcripts were manually coded in a descriptive manner: firstly six anchor codes were extracted from the research questions. Secondly, the transcriptions were analysed according to the anchor codes in order to obtain sub-codes which were finally used to structure our results (see Appendix 4 for example). All the transcriptions are processed based on the same set of the anchor codes that were then confronted and related to each other, deriving meanings from the qualitative data available.

In order to get a more in-depth understanding of key themes running throughout the interviews, word clouds were generated for each individual interview using the sites www.edwordle.net (for the two monks and the community member) and <https://classic.wordclouds.com/> (for the two farmers). These clouds visualize the 100 (for the two monks and the community member)

or around 400 (for the two farmers) most used words -filler words (e.g. "like", "the") were automatically removed by the websites- from an interview and make words bigger the more they are used.

3.2.2. Questionnaire

To counterbalance the non-generalisable nature of the interview results, the research team decided to make use of questionnaires directed at the wider community revolving around Zwolle's monastery. This method allowed us to reach a higher number of responses, making our findings more convincing and relevant. The questionnaire presented a vast array of questions: closed and open ended, multiple choice from given list, and free listing techniques. Questionnaires were handed out physically on the 26th September at the Sunday service mass at the monastery, and then returned by the respondents at the following Sunday service. To reach the highest number of participants possible, we also digitised our questionnaire in Google Forms, a survey administration software provided by Google. Both are available in Appendix 1. The link to this online version of the questionnaire was distributed to the community via the monastery's weekly online newsletter.

Results were coded by hand, and thanks to this process were put into dialogue with previous findings (such as the information gathered during the interviews). Different stances present in the results were then compared and similarities and common themes were identified.

3-2-3 Participant observation

Our team unfortunately did not have the chance to perform participant observation during the online meeting between different parties (e.g. monastery representatives and working groups) involved within the DCZ that was supposed to take place around the end of September. The online meeting did not take place, so we were unable to perform participant observation.

4. Results

In this section we aim to present the results collected through interviews and questionnaires. We will start with the interviews: monk's interviews will be the first, followed by farmers, and the community members. We will then proceed with the questionnaire's result.

4.1. Interviews

During the period of September to October 2021, five semi-structured interviews were conducted. These included two monks from the DMZ (M1 and M2), two farmers that are members of the DCZ (F1 and F2), and one member representing the DCZ who is not a farmer (C1). Our research proposal stated that we would carry out six interviews. However, one interview with a member of the DCZ was called off due to the personal reasons of the informant. Furthermore, although we included the possibility of an interview with Father Godfrey Nzamujo in our research proposal, due to scheduling complications this was unfortunately never realised.

First, we will present the results from the interviews. The output discussed in this section was obtained through coding (Appendix 4) of the original transcribed data. We included quotes from our informants to illustrate our findings. All quotes are translated from Dutch to English. The original transcripts of the interviews can be found in Dutch in Appendix 2, after previous authorization. In the results section, the interviewees are made anonymous.

4.1.1. The monks

When discussing agroecology, both M1 and M2 critiqued the current conventional agricultural system. Their criticism arose from the environmental destruction caused by industrial agribusiness, which they both attributed to the prioritisation of productivity and profitability:

M1: "Then it is all about production and profitability. That, of course, is one of the worst things you can do to nature."

M2: "So what's the real problem? What I just said about cultivation, that we are at the top of the list of world food producers, that we as a country are so caught up in making money and exporting, that we are selling ourselves and our soil short."

M2: "I think conventional agriculture is coming to an end and we need to go in a new direction."

This desire to move on from industrial agriculture in order to save the environment is also reflected in the monks' definitions of agroecology. Both emphasized the need to care for the land. For M1 this was due to a reciprocal relationship with nature in which the land is one's home and must also feel at home with you:

M1: "Agriculture ecology. The proper handling of nature. 'Agros' means field and 'oikos' means household: How do you deal with the field and with the land so that it can also be a home away from home for both of you, and so that the environment and the field also feel at home with you, so to speak?"

When describing agroecological practices, both monks focused largely on food consumption patterns and eating less meat. M1, for example, told us of his hope for a more vegetarian diet to be put in place at the monastery and highlighted the practice of eating together, and making more ecologically conscious food choices together, as a means of incorporating agroecological practices into the Dominican community:

M1: *"(...) That you are together, also in how you eat together and that you make conscious choices in what you eat."*

Interviewer: *"As in you make conscious choices in what you eat?"*

M1: *"That you also know where it comes from. That you also help the people who are trying to do things differently. For example, in the community there are also shopkeepers and so on who try to build up a network in which one person helps another."*

The monks differed more in their approach to human-nature connectedness. M1 talked about nature connection more extensively than M2, perhaps due to his belief that a desire to practice agroecology must arise from first having a connection to nature:

Interviewer: *"Do you think the desire for agroecology is linked to the connection with nature?"*

M1: *"Yes, for some it is. If it doesn't come from the connectedness, then you're not there yet. (...)"*

Interviewer: *"So you say that one is not there yet if they don't have the connection with nature as a basis?"*

M1: *"I think so, then you get a lopsided relationship. You have to feel at home in it. (...) The ideal is (it says so in old texts): everyone sits in his own garden under his own fruit tree, his own fig tree or near the vine. The connectedness is then present. You must also be able to find rest."*

When asked about his personal connection to nature, M1 spoke very poetically about how being in nature for him evoked a bewilderment towards life; How perception-altering experiences such as death can make you more sensitive to the natural world, and how he views nature as God's outdoor church:

M1: *"I have the idea that it is precisely in a cemetery that you suddenly notice that the sun breaks through or that a butterfly flies... That sensitivity is even stronger then because, I think, your life has been turned upside down a bit. The self-evident is broken, of course you are busy with what touches you... One death is not like another, one is somewhat distant, the other close, but it is always something that makes you live more intensely than usual, because the obviousness has been removed. And you notice that at moments like that you are more sensitive to what happens in nature."*

M1: *"Nature to me- As a cyclist, it's God's outdoor church. I look less at the details, but more the open landscape. That includes the clouds, the sky- the changing skies. The alternation of open expanses and edges overgrown. I find myself amidst a whole something. And I love doing it."*

M2, on the other hand, spoke of mankind's God-given duty to care for nature due to us having more of a stewardship role. He described all life - both humans and the non-human environment - as "a gift from God", and thus in need of our conscious care. He also described the need for people to recognise that all of creation is interconnected:

M2: *“We have to look at our lives in a whole new way. To the ground we live on, the ground we cultivate and the ground we make use of. Relation, that is connection. How you treat things.”*

The importance of communication, specifically sharing knowledge and preaching to others, is a key link between agroecology, nature-connectedness, and Dominican values that was identified multiple times by both M1 and M2:

M2: *“(the connecting factor is) Communication and showing people how valuable nature is. (...) It is about daily life: what do you live for and how do you live? How do you deal with each other and with the earth? The connection between all kinds of elements, how you deal with the earth and the soil.”*

M2: *“A better world begins with yourself. If you practise something yourself, then you can also talk about it more enthusiastically with others. Then it becomes something of your own and you can speak from your own experience, in a sermon, a conversation or an article: “Try it too”. It is a staircase.”*

M1: *“(...) the exchange of knowledge. (...) by doing so you can also give each other courage and hope to go further. That good things happen and to enjoy them. It will never be perfect, there will always be bumps, but every now and then you have moments of hope and bright spots.”*

M1 also emphasized how contemplation, another value important to the Dominican vision, helps him feel more connected to nature, both by encouraging an openness to this connection and by evoking amazement at or fascination with nature:

M1: *“Contemplation is to undergo, to let it come to you. That at first, and then.... it gets captivated by something. And then you can think about what it is, why it fascinates you so much, you try to contextualise and understand that. But the very first thing is that you are captivated”*

M1: *“Contemplation for me is letting things be and letting them speak what they have to say to you. Even if they amaze you.”*

M1: *“Circumstances when you take a quiet walk or you meditate a little, when you try to stop the thinking wheel and think about what all needs to be done. Then you are also a little more open to it.”*

Other relevant Dominican values that were highlighted by the monks, in addition to communication and contemplation, included gratitude, modesty, and prayer.

The word clouds (Figures I and II) illustrate that words frequently used by both monks include: nature, people, connected/connection, relationship, eat, and good. Other prominent words include: ‘knowledge’, ‘preach’, ‘find’, ‘Dominican’, ‘beautiful’, ‘hope’, ‘food’, ‘care’, ‘live’, ‘gift’, ‘steward’, and ‘land’.

4.1.2. Farmers

F1 does not identify themselves with the terms Christian, Catholic, or Dominican, but feels part of the DCZ. F2 feels connected to the DKZ, and goes to the Dominican church from time to time, but visits another Catholic church every Sunday. When F1 was asked to define agroecology, they talked about their holistic approach in agriculture and about agriculture as working with natural systems. Soil health is mentioned as an aspect of agroecological farming.

F1: *“Basically it's working with natural systems. It's farming/horticulture based on your understanding of how the natural system of fertility arises and how to preserve that.”*

F1: *“So you have to look at how you can keep the soil intact as much as possible, and at least introduce humus if there is none.”*

F2 mentioned the importance of soil health for a sustainable agricultural system several times during the interview. Also, they mentioned that good intentions will bring you far.

F2: *“A healthy soil will grow resilient crops and there will be less need for the farmer to intervene.”*

F2: *“We now look more at the condition of the soil. We are busy optimising the soil, rather than looking after the crops.”*

F2: *“I think that if you look after the soil and look after your plants and do that with good intentions, you will get very far.”*

F2 emphasized the need for them to promote soil life and to take care of the soil and biodiversity by growing less demanding crops and giving space to nature. According to F2 there are more values other than profitability and production.

F2: *“Soil life must ensure that the minerals in the solid manure become available for the plants.”*

F2: *“If we would only grow potatoes and onions and only grow profitable crops, like sugar beet, we would exhaust our soil. That is why we also believe that we have to grow more grain.”*

F2: *“I let nature take its course.”*

Many of the agroecological practices that were defined by us beforehand are practiced on both F1's and F2's farms. F1 grows organic vegetables and also consumes most of their food organically and locally. In their respective interviews, F1 indicated that they implemented many agroecological practices on their farm, and F2 that they consumed most of their food locally or self-grown. The latter also admitted that they don't eat organic food because of its expensiveness. F2's farm is not certified organic, but F2 mentioned that they try to provide food and create habitat for wild animals (for example insects and birds), by not using any insecticides, by implementing field margins and hedgerows, providing for nesting sites. At the moment they still use herbicides because they consider this more efficient and sustainable than the mechanical weeding methods that would be needed otherwise. Their soil is quite wet, and a lot of mechanical weeding would be needed to be able to produce organically.

F2: *“We also have 2 hectares of food fields. This is around a maize field where we sow grains. We leave the grains for the wintering wildlife.”*

F2 emphasized the need for natural enemies (to control pests) and their implementation of natural borders, hedgerows, flower strips in order to provide food and habitat for these natural enemies.

F2: *"If we take care of the field edges then the predatory wasps and ladybirds [natural pest controlling insects] come."*

F1 mentioned that their way of farming can make a contribution to society, by providing meaningful work.

F1: *"The people who can't participate socially, they can also work on the field and they get the usufruct. The yield is for the one who works the land."*

F2 saw potential in circular agriculture, where arable and dairy farmers cooperate more than currently, but F2 put emphasis on the fact that they do not want to have a mixed farm. F2 strived for closed nutrient cycles and self-sufficiency. They have a vegetable garden and try to incorporate waste-streams into the system, both privately and professionally.

F2: *"We actually only eat our own vegetables, or we get them at stalls we come across on the way to somewhere."*

F2: *"We want to close the cycle."*

F2: *"We try to get the straw we dispose of back as manure."*

Both farmers mentioned being outside as a way to connect to nature, either walking in nature, working on the land, or experiencing changes of the weather or seasons.

F1: *"I wanted to work with my hands [...]"*

When answering our question 'how are you connected to nature?', F1 explains their spirituality in nature.

F1: *"I have never sat down much in my life, I have always walked a lot. My father was always walking too, he never paused. Now I do take time to pause and look around more. And through that I saw the light shining on the land and how the crops did. And when it was dry, the dew helped the crops a bit. Then you see the phenomena a little more. To have this imagery fall into my eyes, that gives me a very grateful feeling."*

F2 answered the question in a more practical way, by explaining how they work together with nature on the farm.

F2: *"Yeah, I do feel connected to nature. Otherwise you can't farm."*

F1 talked about humans as part of and dependent on nature, F2 said that humans need nature and nature needs humans. They both stated that humans are not 'above' nature.

F1: *"You should take the role of being a part of it. Maybe even out of self-preservation, because you have to see that you are dependent on each other."*

F1: *"I think the most important thing is that you see yourself as part of the whole and not as a king. You are not at the top of the pyramid."*

F1: *"We need each other to survive. It's not like humans are above nature either, in my experience."*

F1 mentioned several times that nature is something to respect and watch out for, but at the same time can be very beautiful.

F1: *“To us nature was still quite threatening. Overwhelming and something you had to watch out for and in which you could get lost. You had to make sure you did not go too far into the forest. If you went into the woods you might never come back. That is a different connection with nature than people have nowadays. We buy shoes, watches with altimeters and we consume nature.”*

F1: *“And nature also has its beauty, because we also heard night birds calling. Sometimes very frightening, sometimes very beautiful.”*

F2 also mentioned the beauty of nature.

F2: *“How elusively beautiful nature is put together, or made, grown, I don't know. Then I think: man could not have made that.”*

F1 talked about the calming and grounding effect of practicing agroecological agriculture and how it connects you with the natural world.

F1: *“Of course, it has a very grounding effect when you're constantly hoeing or chopping beets or picking beans or constantly shelling beans. I spend so many hours every week shelling beans. Those are all repetitive tasks and they give a kind of impulse to your heart, which also calms you down and actually grounds you, and that connection with the earth is actually a very important start, I think. To see at once that everything around you is still growing, also withering and just dying again and that the grain of wheat looks dead, is sown in the field and that it just sprouts again, so to speak. If you pick it apart, a dry bean, then you see no life, but the sprout is inside. So then, I put it into the ground and it will be there again next year.”*

F1 explained how dealing with the weather as a natural phenomenon can be a learning experience.

F1: *“You have to deal with good weather, bad weather, heat and drought. That makes it a learning situation.”*

F2 explained that they get help from God in their work on the farm. They say they need themselves, God and nature to be able to run the farm.

F2: *“We ourselves also believe that help must come from above. It is not in our hands. We can adjust a bit, but that's all we can do. We can throw in all sorts of things and think that's good, but it doesn't work like that.”*

F2: *“One third must come from the crops and the soil. One third we must provide ourselves and the other third comes from above with help. Jesus. And Mary, I believe in that too.”*

Interviewer: *“Does your faith have an influence on your work on the farm?”*

F2: *“We pray before eating and we are thankful for everything that grows and blooms here.”*

F1 stated that the activities within the Dominican vision can serve as a catalyst for reflection on human-nature connection.

F1: *“Yes, especially in the songs, where it is often sung about how fragile life is and how dependent you are on whether or not it will rain [...] Many phenomena of nature and growth are sung about in those songs.”*

F1 said that their idea that humans are not above nature is supported by things they heard in the Dominican church.

F1: *"In texts and songs it's said that you shouldn't act as the owner."*

F1 thought that for Dominicans 'less is more' and that many members of the DCZ see themselves as world citizens.

F1: *"It's a kind of community with many members who have a kind of world citizenship feeling."*

F1 saw nature as a gift that we as humans can use but have to preserve. Similarly, F2 said that humans are responsible to take care of the creation.

F1: *"[...] I experience nature as a creation that we have been given. That is a kind of stewardship feeling. That you can work it but that you should especially preserve it."*

F1: *"I think the role is to serve and preserve."*

F2: *"We do think that we are responsible for creation and that we should take care of the earth and land in such a way that it can be passed on, in good condition, to the next generation."*

F1 has a vision for the future where people practice organic agriculture in a holistic way and told us that observation of nature can play a role in this.

F1: *"That people see the light shining on the land and that is necessary for germination and for growing and ripening."*

F2 observes the presence of God while observing their farm and crops.

F2: *"But when we walk across the fields to see what the state of the crops is, then I think: what a miracle and what a blessing that things are going so well for us again. Or at least that we are able to do it again and that it may grow and bloom beautifully."*

F1 mentioned that long-term engagement with sustainable agricultural practices should ideally not come from fear of survival, but from intrinsic motivation. However, in their opinion, there are too few people that start to farm or consume agroecological, from intrinsic motivation, that we need this fear of survival.

F1: *"It is sad that mankind only switches to organic and circular agriculture through fear of survival. That is not what you want."*

F1 told us how they see that a connection is created between people and the land if people work on the farm for one year. After this year they often want to come back to work on the land another year.

F1: *"What I've noticed about working in the field is that when people work there for a year, if you come every day for 40 weeks, you become attached to it."*

According to F2, practice and theory should come closer together, to be able to create a sustainable agricultural sector, while still allowing farmers to make a living. Nowadays, legislation does not fit the daily farming practice.

4.1.3. Community member

When answering the interview questions regarding their perception of connection to nature, C1 told us that they see themselves and humans as part of nature and part of God's creation, and that this is where their sense of connection to nature comes from. They also stated that God's love can be found in nature:

C1: "Nature for instance has no waste, that is food for other animals or plants or whatever. Then we as humans are just wretched. That's where I see greatness. While a forest full of broken trees is not the most romantic image I have of a walk in the woods, I see in the broken trees how ingenious creation is. In that sense I see His love continuing. It goes on, there is never a situation where life does not go on."

Later in the interview, C1 also mentioned that faith is about loving God and loving/caring about things beyond yourself:

C1: "When you talk about faith, you have two laws: Love the Lord. Lord is God. That you at least love and respect the one who created you. Love yourself as your neighbor and love your neighbor as yourself. The moment you mess up with the other, with nature for example and you only think 'me, me, me' then you are not doing well (...). If you are so busy with yourself, then you yourself will perish in the long run, because then there is no more healthy air and no more healthy food et cetera."

C1 also emphasised that faith should be practiced on a daily basis. They continued:

C1: "Another reason why I am saying this is that faith is often seen as something that is outside daily reality, and I think that is a bad thing. When you talk about loving your neighbor as yourself, but you only think about that on Sunday morning, and after that you just go on messing around, then I think: "That's not good". And how do you weigh that in your daily life, in such a way that you are a unity as a human being and not the split human being."

In another segment of the interview, C1 mentioned the importance of landscape to them and its effects on his sense of connection to nature:

C1: "When we go to Switzerland on holiday I love to walk through a beautifully coloured meadow with all those different alpine flowers. We also have alpine flowers in our garden. We're looking for that diversity too. The small-scale landscape, the way we cycle and walk here, is what we're looking for. It does make a difference what kind of landscape you're in. There are landscapes I'd rather not visit. It is so terribly boring. All straight roads with the odd junction here and there."

Throughout the interview, he repeatedly referred to his view on humans and nature: "We control nature only very partially. We are part of nature". He also explained that his reason for practicing agroecology is partly due to his connection and emotional attachment to nature, which he attributes to having respect for God's creation:

C1: "There's an element of 'fun' in it. That you find it interesting. That is more the cognitive side of it. There is also something about the connection with nature. And I do experience that it is very special, nature and that we should be careful with it and have respect for all of creation, so that is more on the emotional level."

When talking about agroecology and the environment, C1 touched upon the implications of consumers' behaviour and their responsibility for transforming current food production systems. According to his observation, many people in the faith community around him are

concerned about the environmental degradation, but they are trapped in their current consumption habits which revolve around conventional agriculture:

C1: *“I think there are many people who feel from their faith that something is not right, but they don't know how to give it a proper form. I also learned from my mother, Wednesday is meatball day, so that ball is on your plate. If you don't get any encouragement you'll just keep bumping along. My son is a video maker. He went to a meat factory to see how things were done. That's where the pigs came in alive. Afterwards he was a vegetarian. That indicated to us: should we eat meat every day? The answer is simply no. We do the best we can.”*

In the light of these religious and emotional connections to nature, C1 practices ecological gardening methods in his garden. This is a place where he can relate himself to nature through a green landscape with flower borders, which provide a habitat for insects/small animals, and lots of sunlight for the sake of plants. This backyard garden is also managed without any form of chemicals, which highlights C1's intention to create a space where human and non-human life can co-exist.

Regarding questions about his long-term connection with nature, C1 suggested that sharing fruit trees in neighbourhoods could give people a sense of long-term relatedness to nature. He explained that even if the fruit itself is the same as what you can get from the supermarket, growing their own fruit would give people a different connection to it due to it coming from their own neighbourhood, which would mean a lot to people.

As for the Dominican values, C1 mentioned openness, gratitude, respect for nature, studying, preaching and knowledge sharing, communication, care, simple living and philosophizing. He recognises himself as a liberal Christian who is always open to people who believe something completely different, or nothing at all. Gratitude is understood as an overarching concept that bridges these differences in belief. During the interview, C1 said:

C1: *“When you think about faith, it's not like I'm walking there praying for my feelings, but you're walking there enjoying it. Probably the same way you do when you're outside in the sunshine. I do the same. So it's not like I'm actively praying for our lord. Not like that. But I am grateful.”*

Humbleness or modesty is another core principle in the Dominican faith system which is applicable to how they see nature.

C1: *“In the grand scheme our world is a miniscule thing. That way you are confronted with your own insignificance. That you are nothing more than a breath of wind. But I have great respect for the gigantic creation that surrounds us.”*

The Dominicans find dialogue very important. They must be in conversation with each other and share insights. Philosophizing, too, is a core value for the Dominicans. This means that you are always supposed to be conscious about your decision making and its impact. You have to get your own thoughts in order.

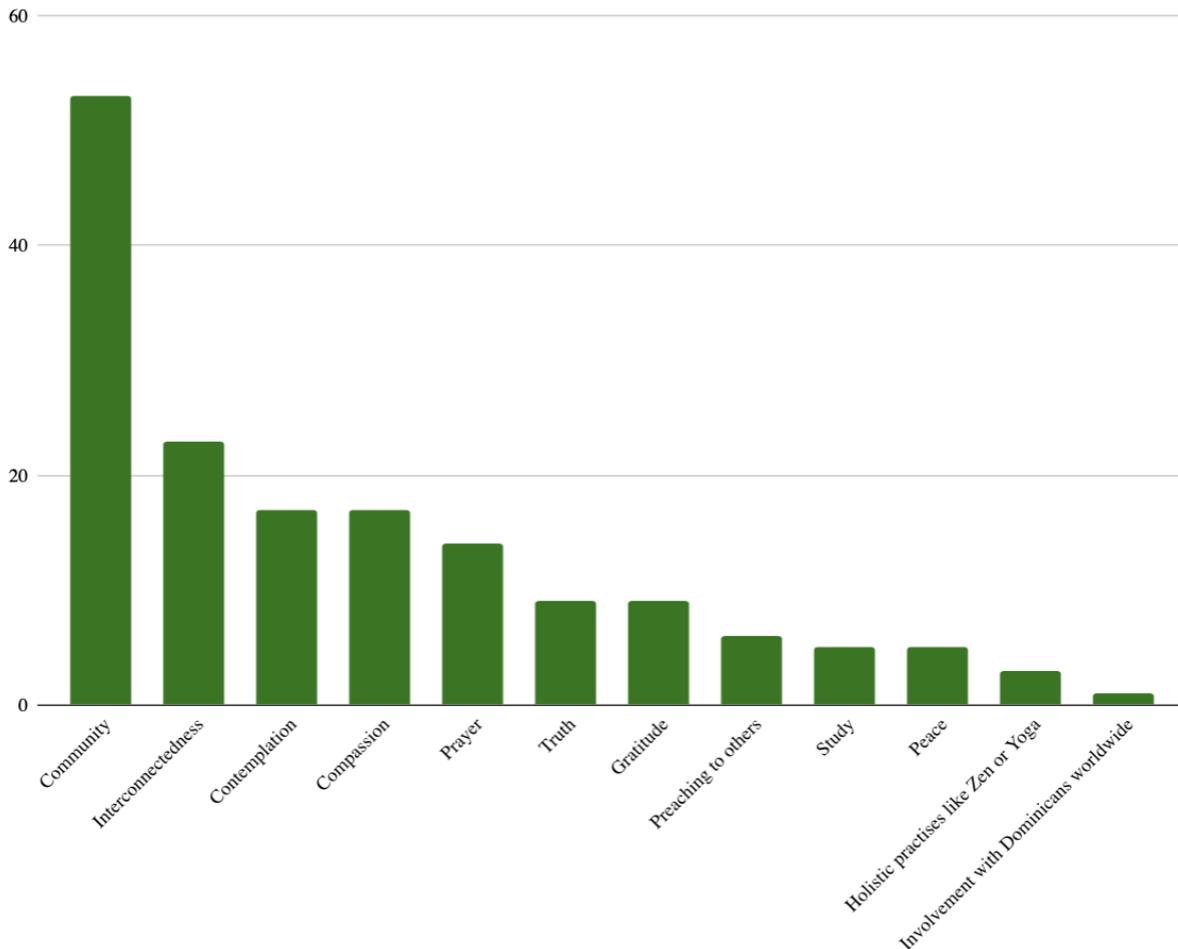


Figure 1. What values, beliefs, and practices do you feel most connected to as a member of the Dominican community? Results of question 2 from questionnaire.

In this figure there is a weighted grading, in the questionnaire people had to choose a top 3. The first choice gets 3 points, the second choice gets 2 and the third gets 1 point. The sum of these points form the bars in the figure. The answers in the figure represent the answers that were available to choose in question 2 of the questionnaire. The most chosen answer based on the sum of each of the top 3 picks turned out to be 'community', as this answer was chosen 13 times as a first choice and six times as a second. After this, 'interconnectedness' received the highest score, followed by both 'contemplation' and 'compassion'.

How do you incorporate these values, beliefs, and practices into your daily life? (Q3)

When asked to write about their own ways in which they integrated their faith into daily life, almost half of the participants expressed their faith through a form of care for other people of the community, often through volunteer work. Other common forms of daily incorporation of their faith included following and organising church services, engaging in personal prayer and engaging in meaningful conversation with those inside and outside of their faith circles. Furthermore, a majority of the respondents included a desire to be thankful and caring towards the planet. In order to visualise the recurrent themes that came up from Q3, answers were coded and anchor-codes were created in order to categorise them. A table which contains these anchor-codes will follow. The complete table with the coded answers can be found in Appendix 1.

Table 1. How do you incorporate these values, beliefs, and practices into your daily life? Results of Question 3 from questionnaire.

Results are condensed into anchor-codes that summarise and categorise these data. From left to right, each column describes anchor-coded values expressed by at least five people (++), by two until five people (+) or by a singular participant (I). Within brackets behind each practice is the exact number of people who expressed they engaged in the practice.

++	+	I
Relationship with others (8)	Ethical choices (3)	Living sustainably (1)
Community Life (7)	Prayers (3)	Religious texts (1)
	Relationship with nature (3)	Meaningful work (1)
	Compassion (3)	Gratitude (1)
	Take care of creation (2)	

How often do you do things to help protect the environment (it can also be something very small)? (Q4)

A total of 19 people, together constituting 65.5% of the sample group, expressed that they actively engage in practices that try to protect the environment at multiple moments of their day.

Which statement best describes the reason why you engage in practices that protect the environment? (Q5)

When asked about why participants engage in the pro-environmental practices that they do, 31.0% (nine people) expressed they acted from a general fear for the wellbeing of the future as their first choice; five people put this particular reason as their second choice and five other people as their third choice (Figure 2). Other common reasons included experiencing a feeling of responsibility towards protecting God’s creation and experiencing God’s essence all around them in nature.

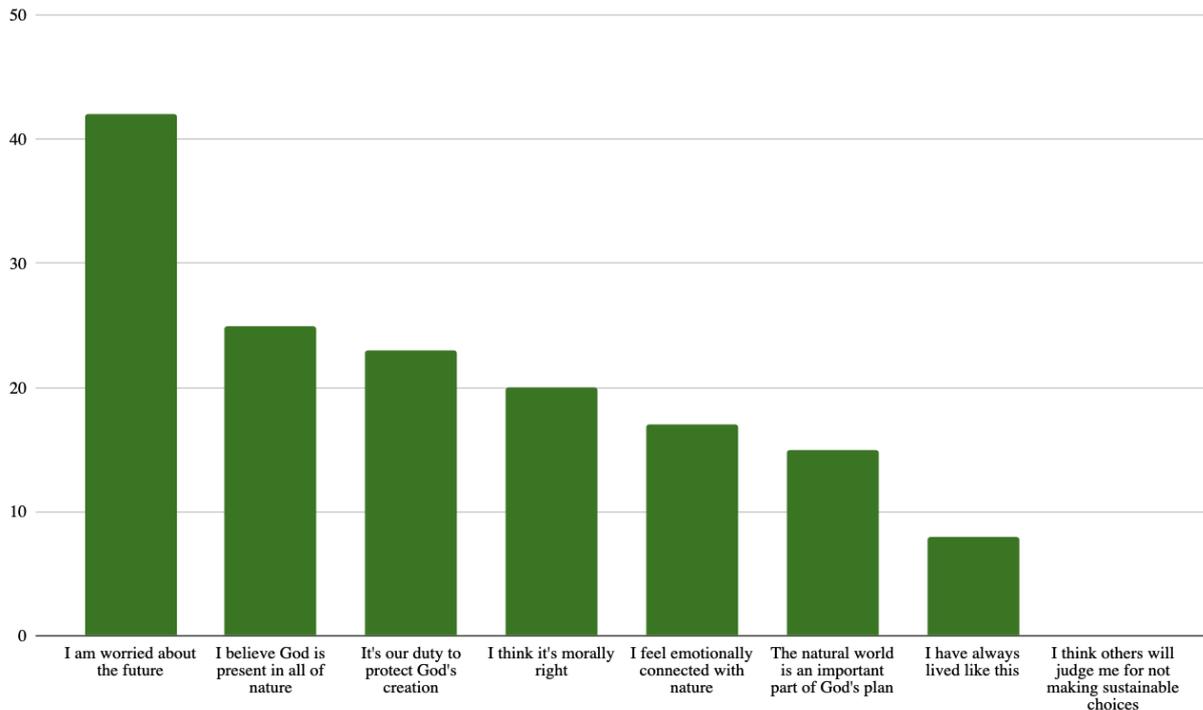


Figure 2. Which statement best describes the reason why you engage in practices that protect the environment? Results of Question 5 from questionnaire. The same weighted grading was utilised, as was used for Figure 1. The answers in the figure represent the answers that were available to choose in question 5 of the questionnaire. The highest weighted answer is: "I am worried about the future". After this, "I believe God is present in all of nature" scored highest. The third highest weighted answer is: "It's our duty to protect God's creation". The answer: "I think others will judge me for not making sustainable choices" was not chosen by any of the participants.

Which statement best describes why you do not always engage in practices that help the environment? (Q6)

When asked about the reasons for why they didn't always engage in pro-environmental practices, the answers that the participants gave were quite divided. The option that was chosen most often as a first pick was being focused on different priorities. More often as a second choice, participants have indicated that they often simply don't think about pro-environmentalism or think engaging in these practices can turn out to be very expensive. Finally, there is often a notion that the participant does not know enough to actively engage in these, or that the individual contribution of each participant is negligible in comparison to the effect that bigger conglomerates have on the environment (Figure 3).

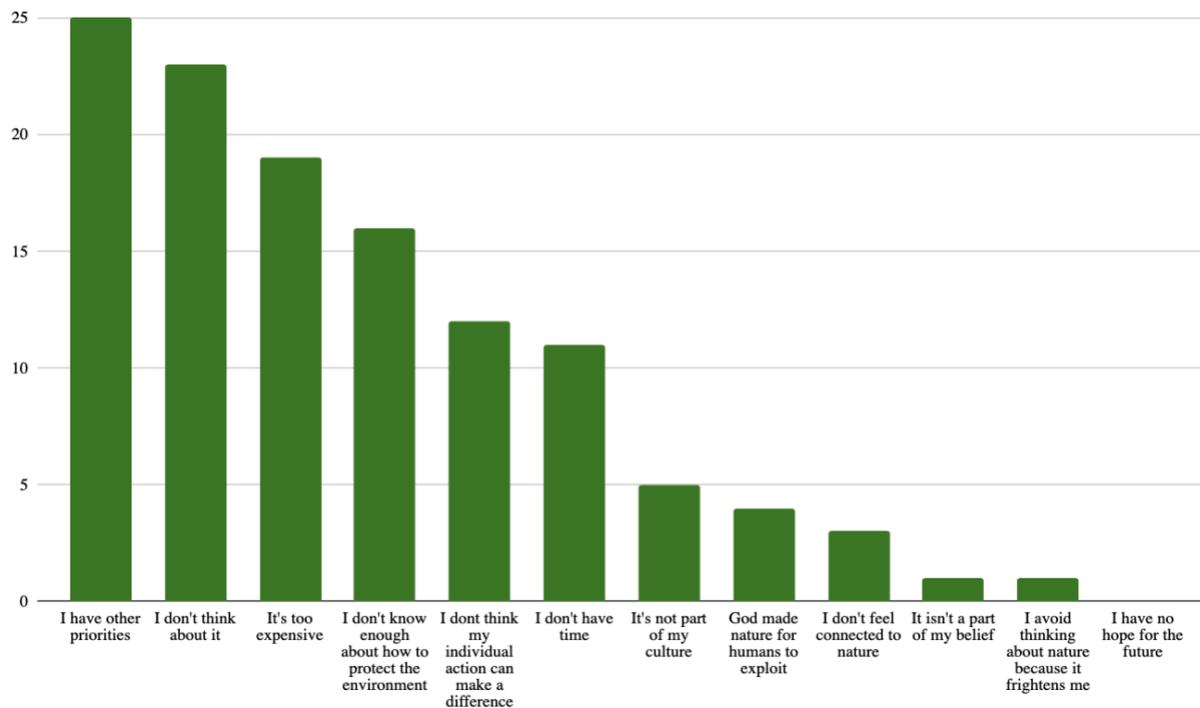


Figure 3. Which statement best describes why you do not always engage in practices that help the environment? Results of Q6 from questionnaire. The same weighted grading was utilised, as was used for Figure 1 and 2. The bars represent the number of times a particular answer was picked in question 6 of the questionnaire. The highest weighted answer is: “Other priorities”. After this, “I don’t think about it” scored highest. The third highest weighted answer is: “Too expensive”. The answer: “No hope for the future” was not chosen by any of the participants.

About 86.2% of the participants said they regularly felt connected to nature, with the remainder of the sample group admitting they sometimes did as well (Q7: *Do you feel connected to nature?*). Regarding whether or not faith contributed to how they felt connected to nature, 48.3% indicated they felt this was very much the case. A follow-up question revealed that many people felt like faith connected them to nature when they took the time to make conscious moments of thankfulness and awareness for the commodities that they should not take for granted, such as having food and shelter readily available for them. Furthermore there is a substantial part of the survey group who answered they found this connection through compassion and prayer.

Two-thirds of the participants had already heard of the term ‘agroecology’. Members of the DCZ have apparently come into contact via many different ways, predominantly via the DMZ itself or through newspaper articles.

To what extent do you think your faith makes you feel connected with nature? (Q8)

This question was aimed to understand to what extent faith makes the respondents feel connected to nature, and the responses we collected signal that the vast majority of the examinees sense a connection between their faith and nature, setting up a solid base of the possible exploration of this relation between faith and nature within the community.

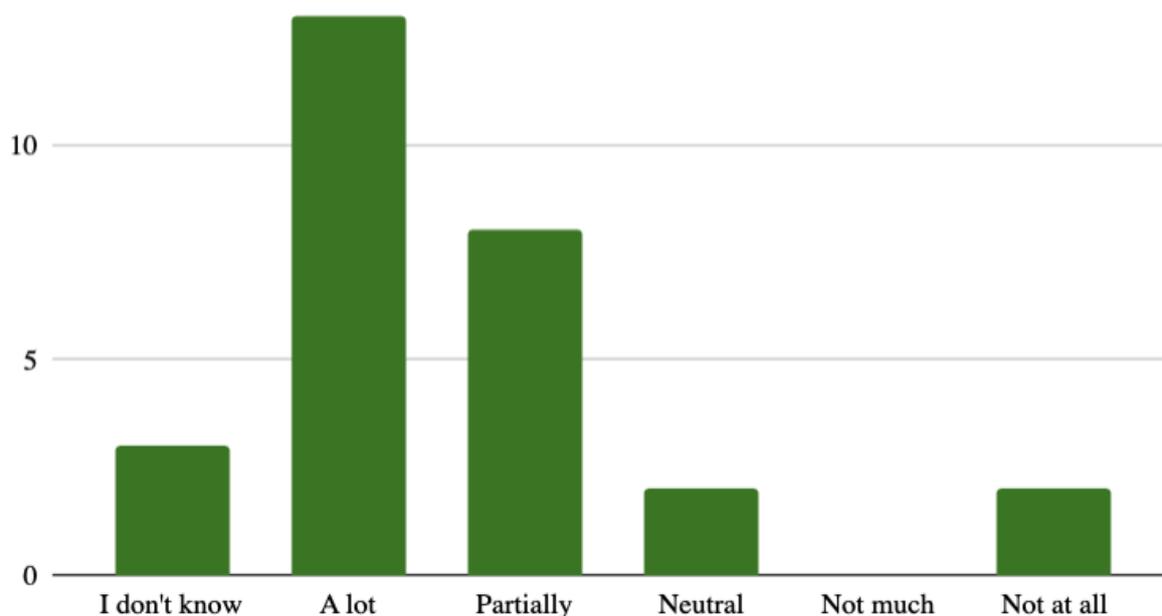


Figure 5. To what extent do you think your faith makes you feel connected with nature? Results of Q8 from questionnaire. The results originally included a top 3 system of choices which have been summed up via a weighted scoring system (first choice equals 3 points, second choice equals 2 points, third choice equals 1 point) to create this singular visual output. Of the participants, 75% answered with either 'a lot' or 'partially', with the other 25% being divided across the options of 'I don't know', 'neutral' and 'not at all'.

Following, we find question number 9 which aims to explore which aspects of the faith make the community members more connected to nature, allowing us to better interpret the answers received in Q8:

What aspects of your faith make you feel more connected to nature?

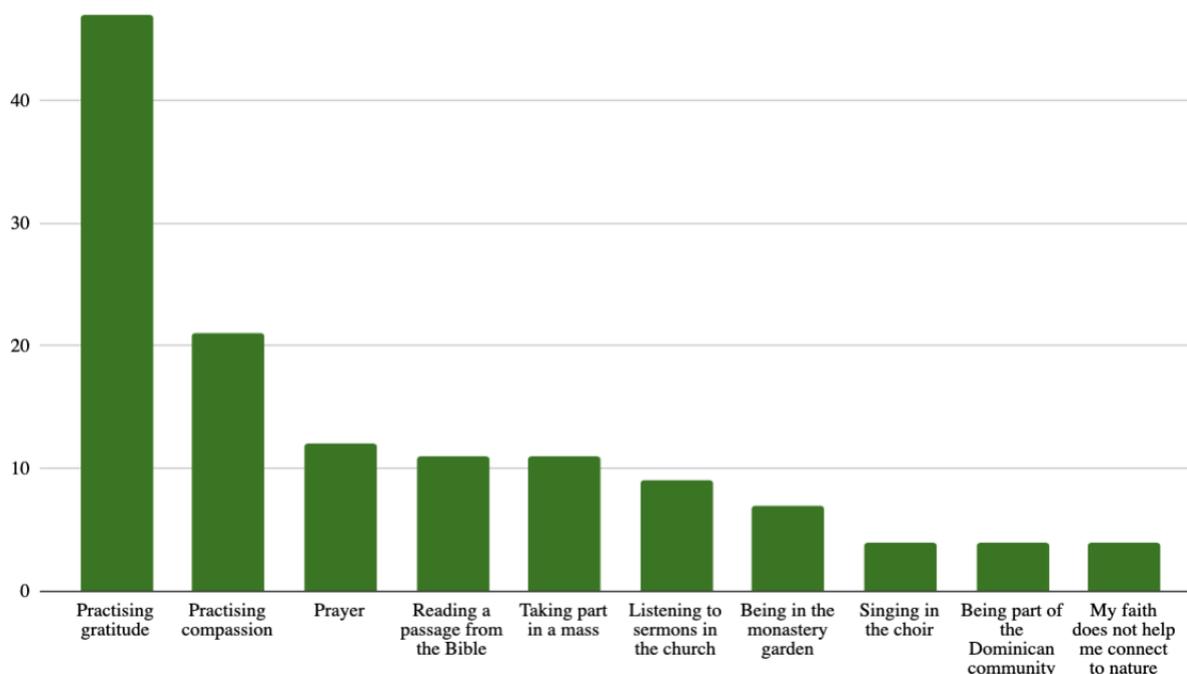


Figure 6. What aspects of your faith make you feel more connected to nature? Results of Q9 from questionnaire The same weighted grading was utilised, as was used for Figure 1, 2, 3 and 4. The answer with the highest weighted score is "practising gratitude", followed by the value of 'practicing compassion'.

From the graphical representation it is striking that the option "practicing gratitude" is by far the most chosen, followed by "practicing compassion", both very important practices in the Dominican vision. This result is of great value in the overall preliminary analysis of the data found through the questionnaire, highlighting how much the Dominican vision plays a prominent role in understanding and contextualising the relationship between faith and nature by the respondents, framing Christian faith practices to the Dominican vision

Should the Dominican community of Zwolle engage with one or more of the agroecological practices in the list above? (Q13)

One of the main focuses of our inquiry was to look at what practices could enhance a connection between the vision of the DMZ and their engagement in agroecology in the long term. To gain insights on this question we first asked the questionnaire participants whether the Dominican community should be more involved in one or more of the above agroecological practices (referring to a list of agroecological practices). This question was answered with either a yes or a no. Of the participants, 58,6% answered 'yes'.

If yes: Which one(s)? (Q14)

This question was aimed to understand what these practices would be, if the respondents answered yes to the previous question (Q13). The table that follows aims to categorise the inputs collected in Q14, where the respondents were clearly asked to indicate which practices they would like to engage with. This table has a strong directional value, as it can suggest which practices the community representatives would be most inclined to engage with.

Table 2. If yes: Which one(s)? Results of Q14 from questionnaire. The agroecological practices that members of the DCZ would like to engage with. From left to right, each column describes practices that were being performed by at least five people (++) , by at least four people (+) or by a singular participant (I). Within brackets behind each practice is the exact number of people who expressed they engaged in the practice.

++	+	I
Mutual learning experiences exploring the topic of agroecology (e.g. lectures on sustainable agriculture) (7)	Participating in community agriculture (e.g. being a member of a self-harvesting garden or a farmer's vegetable packet) (4)	Insect hotels (1)
Vegetable garden (5)	Planting trees (3)	Flower beds (1)
Composting (5)	Urban agriculture (2)	Slow food (1)
	Food forestry (2)	
	Eating ecologically produced food (e.g. organic, or from a food forest) (2)	

As the table displays, the majority of respondents think that mutual learning experiences about topics such as agroecology and sustainable practices would be activities that they would engage with. After this option, the most chosen were vegetable garden and composting. We believe it's relevant to signal that the option "Participating in community agriculture (e.g. being a member of a self-harvesting garden or a farmer's vegetable packet)" comes straight after the most picked ones, indicating a strong community feeling. The results in Table 2 are of great importance in answering the second sub-research question, giving us tangible information on

which agroecological practices the community members reached by the questionnaire would like to engage with.

It is interesting to contextualise these findings in the current situation of the community, thanks to Q12, that was asking the questionnaire participants with which practices they engaged with already. (*What agroecological practices have you engaged with? multiple choice are allowed*)

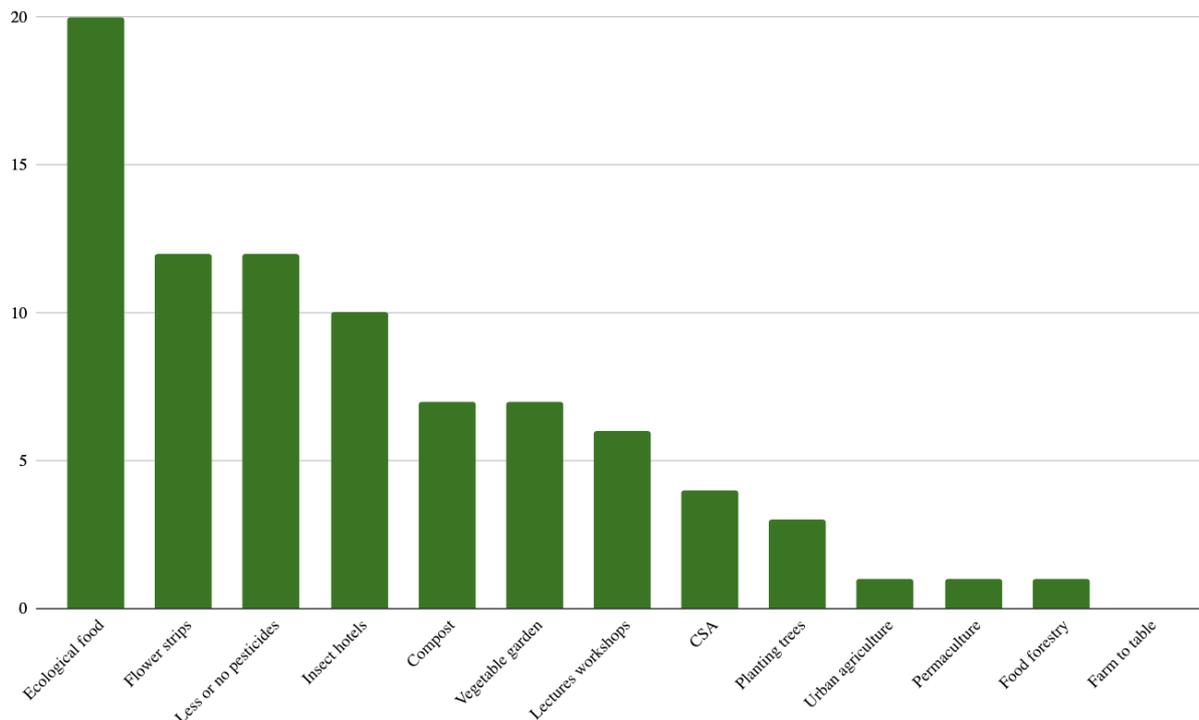


Figure 4. (Results from questionnaire Q12) Agroecological practices that member of the Dominican community are already engaging in. The same weighted grading was utilised, as was used for Figure 1, 2 and 3.

What agroecological practices have you engaged with? (Q12)

The consumption of ecologically produced food (e.g. organic or biodynamic) was chosen most often as a way to integrate pro-environmental practices into the DMC. This emphasises that the choice as a consumer is apparently of great importance and appeal within a substantial portion of the participants of our inquiry, thus suggesting a possible perspective from which to encourage future engagement of the community with agroecological practices; further reflection will follow in the discussion section.

On the other hand, the second, third, and fourth most picked options are “less/no pesticides”, “flower strips” and “insect hotels”, focusing more on ecological holistic practices and less about consumer behaviour.

If no, why not? (Q15)

Question 15 of the questionnaire was aimed at understanding why the remaining 42.4% answered 'no' to question 13 (Q13: *Should the Dominican community be more involved in one or more of the above agroecological practices?*). In an attempt to categorise the type of responses obtained, they were divided into three codes: positive, neutral and negative. The coding of this response can be found in Appendix 1.

Positive responses:

Out of the twelve “Nee” in Q13, six answers were coded as “positive” responses: two of them were very clear in stating that the community is already “doing enough” or “doing an excellent job so far”. One of them stated that it is “no longer necessary”, which was interpreted as the efforts of the community having already achieved good results. The last positive response affirms that the Dominican community does not “have to” engage with those practices, but it could and it suits them given their inclusion as part of the Dutch association for sustainable places of worship, *Groene Kerken*.

Neutral responses:

Two answers were coded as neutral, as the opinion expressed is not firm and definitive. Both of them state that they do not know if they should engage with these practices, with one adding that they had “never heard of it”, probably referring to agroecology.

Negative responses:

Four answers were coded as negative as the stance was clearly against a purposeful involvement with agro-ecological practices.

Three out of the four claim that engagement with such practices would not be in line with the Dominican vision, and clearly that the spiritual word and faith are not in a dialogue with sustainability and climate issues.

5. Discussion

5.1. Dominican values and long-term agroecological engagement

In this passage our aim is to discuss our findings articulated in chapter 4, by relating them to the Dominican vision and the theoretical lenses explored beforehand. In the discussion of the results we will be guided by the four sub-research questions, which we will not answer singularly, but use as a guide for our reflection process to answer the main research question: *What agroecological practices can be used to enhance the connection between the values of the Zwolle Dominican community and their engagement in agroecology in the long term?*

Forming a deep connection with nature is an important prerequisite to the long-term practice of PEBs (Whitburn et al., 2019; Martin et al., 2020; Richardson et al., 2020; Riechers et al., 2021) such as agroecology. Further, a long-term connection with nature, and therefore the PEBs that arise as a result, is more likely to be maintained when people connect to nature on an emotional, spiritual, or philosophical level (Ives et al., 2018). Teachings found in religions such as Christianity can be interpreted in a way that evokes this type of connection and promotes PEBs (Kalamas et al., 2014). Our team therefore aimed to identify which religious values deemed important by the DCZ can be connected to agroecology. This enabled us to recommend practices that can evoke a long-term connection between the Dominican faith and agroecology, namely those that highlight the relationship between faith and agroecology and encourage a deeper connection with nature.

Following the literature analysis, and subsequent recognition of the importance of forming a foundational connection to nature, our recommendations will also branch beyond traditional agroecological practices (such as permaculture, composting, and food forestry) to include other practices and methods of reconnecting with nature such as stories (Hsu, 2003; Korten, 2006; Bateson, 2007), art (York, 2014), sharing with others, and contemplation (Macy, 1998). The results of the interviews and questionnaire also lend themselves to understanding links between Dominican values and these alternative practices. Our results highlighted key aspects of the Dominican vision that connect people of the DCZ to nature and/or agroecology. These include: gratitude and thankfulness (especially related to food, consumption, and making conscious choices); communication, knowledge sharing, and connecting with the community; contemplation and prayer; and extending love and care beyond yourself (compassion). In order to identify the best ways to encourage the DCZ to engage with agroecological practices in the long term, it is important for us to understand how this recognition of the relationship between faith and nature, and the specific values which enhance this connection, can be utilized effectively.

Gratitude and contemplation

By far the most popular aspect of the Dominican vision for the community regarding nature-connectedness, as shown by the questionnaire results, was practicing gratitude. The questionnaire respondents elaborated that their faith connected them to nature when they took the time to make conscious moments of thankfulness and awareness for the commodities that

they should not take for granted, such as having food and shelter readily available for them. Gratitude was also identified as important by multiple interviewees. Gratitude is often practiced by religious communities in relation to food, such as being thankful for the harvest and the food on your plate. The theme of consumption, especially related to food, came up multiple times during data analysis; the agroecological practice that the majority of questionnaire respondents currently practise is eating ecologically produced food, and the monks also spoke at length about consumption patterns and making more ecologically conscious food choices. This presents an opportunity for combining the practice of agroecological food consumption with the Dominican value of practicing gratitude in order to encourage the community to engage with more environmentally conscious food consumption. The monastery could host lunches or dinners where everyone is encouraged to bring a dish made using locally and organically produced fruits and vegetables. Before eating, people could then be given the opportunity to share with others the aspects of God's creation they are grateful for that went into the whole process of bringing the food to the table.

Another Dominican value which came up multiple times during data collection was contemplation. One interviewee explicitly stated the importance of contemplation or meditation for feeling more connected to nature, as it encourages both an openness to this connection and evokes amazement at or fascination with nature. This fascination or awe, inspired by contemplative activities such as walks in nature, was also implicitly hinted at by other interviewees. Contemplation was also identified as a high-scoring value for the community during analysis of the questionnaire results. Undertaking silent meditation or contemplation within natural environments can encourage nature-connectedness (Unsworth et al., 2016). Some agroecological practices, such as vegetable gardening, can also have meditative qualities. One of the farmers that we interviewed described the meditative task of shelling beans as a means of connecting to nature:

F1: *“Of course, it has a very grounding effect when you're constantly hoeing or chopping beets or picking beans or constantly shelling beans. I spend so many hours every week shelling beans. Those are all repetitive tasks and they give a kind of impulse to your heart, which also calms you down and actually grounds you, and that connection with the earth is actually a very important part, I think. To see at once that everything around you is still growing, also withering and just dying again and that the grain of wheat looks dead, is sown in the field and that it just sprouts again, so to speak. If you pick it apart, a dry bean, then you see no life, but the sprout is inside. So then, I put it into the ground and it will be there again next year.”*

This form of contemplative practice could be encouraged from the community in a similar manner to the gratitude exercise detailed above. When preparing the agroecological food to share with the community, for example, people could be encouraged to reflect on how their food is grown and where it comes from.

Communication and knowledge sharing

Another key aspect of the Dominican vision that people identified as important to their nature-connectedness and engagement with agroecology was the prioritization of communication (talking with their community about nature-connectedness and/or agroecology), knowledge sharing, and community. Opening up conversations or dialogues about nature connection, associated perceptions and emotions, and the effect this has on behaviour can encourage people to more deeply understand their own relationship with nature and how this compares

to other people in their community. Nature-connectedness might not be something people tend to explicitly consider for the first time without being prompted to do so, and thus many members of the community may not have previously dissected the relationship between their faith, nature, and the resulting necessity of pro-environmental behaviours. Starting dialogues about this within the community would be a very valuable first step in promoting engagement with pro-environmental behaviours, and these conversations could be expanded to include specific connections with faith and agroecology.

The importance of communication and knowledge sharing for the Dominican vision also resonates with information found during the literature study on inspiring long-term connection with nature and engagement with PEBs through stories and storytelling (Hsu, 2003; Korten, 2006; Bateson, 2007). As Hsu (2003) writes:

“Narratives have been shared throughout history to entertain, preserve culture, and instil morals. They can help us understand context, develop a sense of place, and provide insight into different ways of seeing. Given our current trajectory towards ecological crisis, resulting from the degradation of the Earth's life systems, a shift towards ecological consciousness is needed to protect biodiversity, water, and land. This research explores the possibility of engaging the individual experience of stories to support a shift in consciousness.”

The stories told in the workshops analysed by Hsu (2003) talk about the interconnectedness of humans and the whole natural world, otherwise known as the ‘web of life’, and other concepts related to deep ecology. As stories are one of the key means through which people learn (Bateson, 2007), tailoring these to encourage or evoke certain emotions, perceptions, and behaviours. Faith is also largely taught and internalised through stories, such as those told in the Bible (especially regarding creation), in the songs and psalms read in sermons, and the sharing of religious experiences. These can be shared and communicated in such a way that promotes connectedness to nature and/or engagement with agroecological practices.

Regarding the connection between Dominican values and agroecology/PEB, a further implementation of the Dominican value of knowledge sharing in promoting engagement with agroecology could be simply encouraging communication of agroecological practices that could be adopted by the community, as well as guidance on how to do so. This could be done in a formal setting, whereby ‘experts’ or those with more experience give lectures or distribute information on agroecological practices. When asked what agroecological practices they would want to engage with in the future, the most popular answer from questionnaire respondents was “mutual learning experiences exploring the topic of agroecology (e.g. lectures or sustainable agriculture)”. This is something that the monastery has already tried to engage with through the “Lessen van Godfrey” and the “Landwerkdagen” that were organised as part of the project ‘GROND’. These events were perhaps not adequately advertised to the wider community, however, as they have not yet seen much engagement, which presents a concrete area for improvement. This suggestion also perfectly matches another result obtained from the questionnaires: when respondents were asked why they do not engage in practices that “help the environment”, some stated that they do not know enough about these behaviours to actively engage with them. We read these results as an opportunity to address this lack of awareness and focus on learning experiences for the community, or on the improvement of the community outreach regarding such learning occasions. Agroecological knowledge sharing could also be practiced in a less formal setting where members of the DCZ are

encouraged to share agroecological methods that they are already engaging with, and in doing so pass to others the inspiration and courage to try out the same practice.

5.2. What agroecological practices can be used?

The main research question: *What agroecological practices can be used to enhance the connection between the values of the Zwolle Dominican community and their engagement in agroecology in the long term?*

The data that we collected via our studies of the questionnaires, interviews and literature did yield some useful and applicable insights. First of all, the majority of interviewees expressed a blissful awareness of the beauty and wondrousness of nature when they took the time to contemplate in its proximity. Both F1, F2 and C1 described a sensation of respect, awe and love when observing phenomena like the sun illuminating the green of the fields and watching the arable land flourish when given the chance to be left to its own devices. The teachings of Jesus Christ (Mark 4:26), where he tells the farmer he can sleep while the seed sprouts, shine through in the respect that these people have for nature like an entity that should be treated as an equal. Even M1, while being interviewed within their own room within the monastery, expressed great joy in watching the plants in his room flourish, even remarking at one point in the middle of the interview on the crafty little spiderweb that was spun around the potted orchid in front of him; And M2, as an avid cyclist, expressed a constant connection to nature whenever they would go through the outdoors, being actively moved by the sight of a flowering blossom to the point where they would desire to carefully caress its petals.

All these informants express that being in proximity to nature of any size that could inspire the wonder and the power of God's natural creation, would attract one towards wanting to engage more with it. The effect that small scale engagement with nature can have on connecting God's presence to said nature has been advocated by many of the interviewees.

As a starting platform, we highlighted how the members of the DCZ who answered to the questionnaire do already engage with agroecological practices (Figure 4), with the highest involvement being with ecological food, flower strips and no/less pesticides. Thanks to the interviews it was striking how the engagement with agroecological practices and PEB is deeply related and intertwined to the faith. F2 states that the farm is a system composed of three elements: God, nature and themselves, highlighting how deep the connection of the practices they perform in their farm is in constant communication with the faith realm.

In the Results section, there was mention of the questionnaire indicating that participants often do not engage with pro-environmental practices due to not knowing enough about the topic to actively engage in them. Furthermore, it was often believed that the individual contribution of each participant is negligible in comparison to the effect that bigger conglomerates have on the environment (Figure 3). This signals a lack of awareness and knowledge about these topics that could possibly be tackled by a targeted action by the external commissioners.

In the questionnaire, two of the dominant agroecological practices that questionnaire participants wanted the DCZ to be more engaged with included having a vegetable garden and partaking in composting. Given the accessibility of these practices we would advise to expand upon the ways that these practices can be creatively explored.

Intercropping

Interconnectivity and interdependence lie at the core of both agroecology and the Dominican viewpoint. Visualising the importance of needing to connect with one another, to learn from each other and to experience that people can achieve so much more as part of a collective than if by always trying to achieve things on their own, is something that can be seen reflected in the practice of intercropping (Wezel et al., 2014; Vandermeer, 1992). This agroecological practice combines the goal of maximising one's available arable space with the synergistic prowess of different species of neighbouring crops working together: By utilising the space left available between one type of crop to grow a smaller second type, the practitioner uses the soil's maximum potential of the available space, limited as it may be. Therefore, this practice can be applied even by community members with but little garden space for novel projects such as this one. Furthermore, the benefit of breaking the monotony of a pasture with only one type of plant is that by introducing a different species will inhibit pest infestations. As many pest species are specialists, they thrive on being able to travel across expanses where they encounter only their target food plant. By introducing another plant in the mix, this will slow down the spread of the pest. The cooperative way in which the crops strengthen and maximise each other's harvest yield through this particular pattern of planting reflects a microcosm of the importance of community within the Dominican faith.

Herb spiral

Herb spirals consist of a stone wall fashioned out of tiles or bricks spiraling upwards. Within the borders of this spiraling wall soil is added and herbs are grown (Truong et al., 2016). Because of the height difference across the spiral, the upper parts will become more dry than the lower parts, allowing reared Mediterranean herbs to obtain more flavour. Meanwhile the lower parts retain more water, making them suitable for more water demanding plants, even including strawberries. The stones of the wall retain heat from the sun, making the spiral less cold during winter and even warmer during the summer. This also adds again to the flavour of the herbs. The technical aspects to creating a herb spiral are quite accommodating to recreational use, as essentially there is not really a wrong way to construct one and allows for a lot of creative freedom. Typically a herb spiral does not have to take up more than a circular space of 1,5 meters in diameter, so it doesn't require much garden space. However, it is our opinion that the biggest strength of this practice being encouraged with the community is the ease with which one can be constructed. One needs only soil, seeds and stones placed in an upward spiral, to see how the natural forces of heat and hydrology impact the production of the different types of crops that are reared upon it. Allowing an up close view to how efficient use of space and resources can be used to produce things yourself we would deem a most promising approach to introducing the community to more applied forms of agroecology. In the same way that the DMZ aims to create a strong cohesion between its community members, so does agroecology elevate the conventional vegetable garden to a tapestry-like system of different crops, soils and practices affecting and strengthening one another.

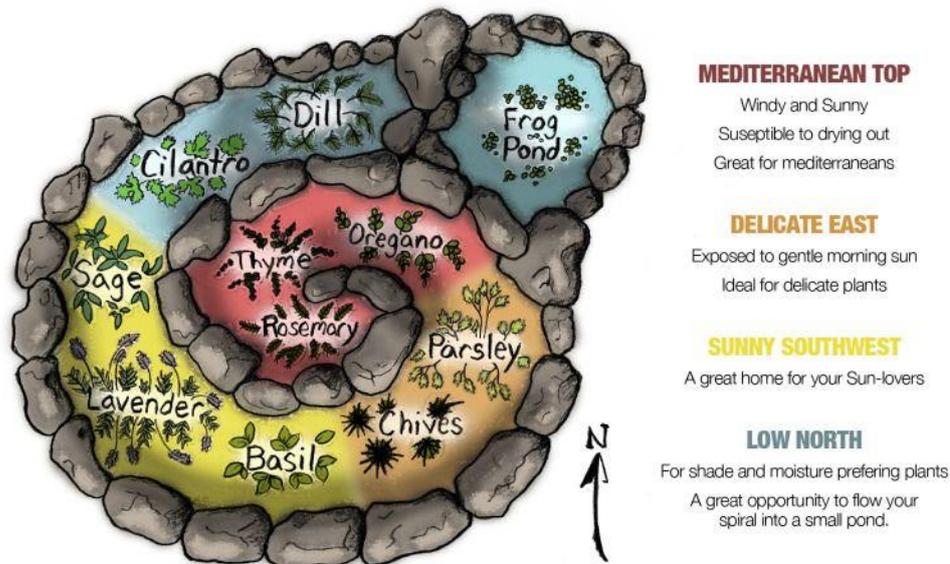


Figure 7. Example of a herb spiral retrieved from Pinterest. <https://www.pinterest.com/permaculturing/herb-spirals/>

5.3. Discussion on methodology

In this section we will address our methodological choices. In previous sections we have addressed our arguments for the methodological approaches we utilised; at the same time we believe it would be insightful to reflect on how the research process and the findings would have changed if we were to apply a different methodological approach in this research. Starting with the interviews, we believe a more structured approach would have left less space for the interviewees to share personal experiences dealing with topics in the interview guides previously established. These personal insights play a fundamental role in generating our other output (community guidebook). The guidebook places strong emphasis on people sharing their motivational, educational and inspirational stories as a valuable learning experience for the readers (Dawes, 2001). It is our consensus that if the interviewees were not allowed space to direct their answers towards the direction wished for, such rich experiences would have not been shared in such a comfortable setting, and therefore we would not have yielded data as valuable as the one we did by semi-structured interviewing. Regarding the sampling procedure, we did wonder what would have happened if we have had followed a randomised sampling procedure: in this scenario, our findings would have been generalisable and proven for external validity, but with the risk of being less relevant in answering our research questions, hence to meet the needs of our commissioners.

As far as the questionnaires are concerned, we are convinced that there was no method that would have allowed us to reach out to the number of questionnaire respondents in a more time effective way, considering that time was amongst our biggest constraints. Nevertheless, the way in which the physical questionnaire forms were distributed to the informants could have

been more effective. We attended one of the Sunday sermons and handed out the forms in person. However, the filled-out forms were not collected immediately. The attendees of the sermon took the questionnaire home and brought the filled one to the following sermon. This might have reduced the possible responses. In order to obtain responses from all the sermon attendees, we should have prepared pens and asked them to fill the form on the spot. Despite this downside, our approach might have allowed the respondents more time to think about their answer. This is presumably one of the reasons why we have some elaborated answers on open ended questions in the questionnaires.

Moreover, it is vital for us to discuss the generalisability of our findings. As the timespan available for this study was limited, we decided to conduct only six interviews. This decision makes it hard to generalise the results, as they would not represent the monastery's community given the fact that the sampling procedure that we followed would have not allowed us to claim external validity. In this scenario the interviews helped us to contextualise our findings, offering valuable insights on how topics of our research are perceived, understood and internalised by important stakeholders in this project. To overcome this problem, we decided to reach out to a bigger portion of the community through a questionnaire. We do not expect the data collected through questionnaires to create a random representative sample: our aim was to widen our understanding of the topics revolving around our research questions and to obtain more answers in the short time available. We are positive that our choices yielded useful and insightful information for our commissioners, even if not statistically representative

In conclusion, when aiming to apply the findings of our project and the answers to our research questions, we have to give a precursory disclaimer that to enable us to give more robust advice we would have benefitted from more time. Both the inclusion of more DCZ representatives in our sample group and obtaining and processing more useful literature could have been expanded upon, and if future research continues to look into this topic, it is our opinion that our methodologies could be applied on further sample groups.

6. Recommendations

The DMZ asked our consultancy team to investigate how to integrate agroecological practices into the Dominican community. The following section details the conclusions of our research and subsequent recommendations for the monastery. In Figure 8, a visual representation of our recommendations can be found.

Long-term nature connection

We found that sustaining nature connectedness is an essential basis of long-term engagement with PEBs such as agroecology. We also found that strong connections to nature are often built through philosophy, spirituality, and emotion. We therefore recommend that the monastery utilise the philosophical, spiritual, and emotional aspects of the Dominican vision, especially those identified as important by the community during our research, to stimulate and sustain nature-connectedness within the community. The following practical recommendations are based on the values highlighted in this report:

- **Communication:** Opening up conversations or dialogues about nature connection, associated perceptions and emotions, and the effect this has on behaviour can encourage people to more deeply understand their own relationship with nature and how this compares to other people in their community. We recommend that the monastery facilitate open dialogue sessions in which people are encouraged to reflect on and share about their faith and nature.
- **Knowledge sharing:** When asked what agroecological practices they would want to engage with in the future, the most popular answer from questionnaire respondents was “mutual learning experiences exploring the topic of agroecology (e.g. lectures on sustainable agriculture)”. We therefore recommend that the monastery improve their marketing and outreach of knowledge sharing initiatives such as the “Lessen van Godfrey”.
- **Gratitude:** The Dominican value of practicing gratitude can be combined with agroecological food consumption in order to inspire nature connectedness and subsequently encourage the community to engage with more environmentally conscious food consumption. We recommend that the monastery host community lunches or dinners where everyone is encouraged to bring a dish made using locally and organically produced fruits and vegetables. Before eating, people should be given the opportunity to share with others the aspects of God’s creation that they are grateful for that went into the whole process of bringing the food to the table.
- **Contemplation:** We recommend encouraging people to undertake silent meditation or contemplation within natural environments, and look into the possibility of holding sermons, silent prayer sessions, or Bible study groups in an outdoor setting such as the monastery garden. Contemplation for nature-connectedness can also be practiced by the community in a similar manner to the gratitude exercise detailed above; when preparing agroecological food to share, people could be encouraged to reflect on the wonder of creation by considering, for example, all the natural processes and beings that are needed to grow their food.

It is important to use the DCZ’s sense of community and togetherness as a tool to inspire nature-connectedness and engagement with agroecology; the exercises and practices detailed above would therefore be most effective when shared in groups or pairs. These

exercises, along with other practices, stories, Bible quotes about nature, songs about nature, and artwork inspiring human-nature connectivity, will be included in the guidebook that will be produced as an outcome of this research. The guidebook will also incorporate phrases and ideas from *Laudato Si: On care for our common home*, the second encyclical of Pope Francis, in which he calls for environmental action inspired by faith. The aim of this guidebook is to inspire the community to connect with nature through faith, and encourage them to engage with agroecology because of their faith.

Agroecological practices

For the incorporation of agroecological practices into the DCZ we recommend the monastery to:

- Organise a pick-up point for vegetable boxes from the Warmoezerij to make it easier for people that visit the DMZ to get access to agroecological food. Being a pick-up point could help to bring agroecological food closer to the DCZ. Supporting a local organic farmer, showing compassion and connectivity by actively engaging with agroecology in a more applied fashion.
- Buy organic vegetables through the Warmoezerij and other local farmers and to buy the bulk, canned and dry foods through an organic (instead of a regular) wholesaler. We expect that eating local and organic food as a daily practice of the monastery inhabitants and staff can result in a rippling effect. Next to the effect that local farmers will have another customer, it could have a positive effect on how the monastery is perceived in terms of sustainability and normalise the consumption of organic and local products. Also, it could make it easier for the pastors to talk about taking care of nature and being grateful, when they know where their daily food comes from and that it is produced in an ethical and sustainable way.
- Stimulating agroecological practices, such as creating a herb spiral together with the community or setting up the intercropping system in a vegetable garden could bring people closer to each other and to nature. We will provide the community with inspiration for making a herb spiral in our guidebook. An advantage of these practices is that it can be practiced both as individuals and as a group of people. It is not hard to imagine that an association for those who like to actively engage in these practices is voluntarily formed within DCZ when enough people are interested in it.
- To keep organising the “Landwerkdagen”, that were organised as part of the project ‘GROND’. Our informants expressed their connection with nature and agroecology to be reinforced by being outside in nature and working in agriculture as a daily practice. Therefore, it could be interesting to see if more people of the DCZ will increase their connection with nature through working in agriculture on a regular basis. The former events were perhaps not adequately advertised to the wider community before, however, as they have not yet seen much engagement. This presents a concrete area for improvement. This suggestion also perfectly matches another result from the questionnaires: when respondents were asked why they do not engage in practices that “help the environment”, some stated that they do not know enough about these behaviours to actively engage with them. As far as this lack of engagement is concerned, we recommend the monastery to be more explicit about the vision on the topic of agroecology in the celebrations and newsletter in order to enthuse the DCZ to engage in the Landwerkdagen and future activities.

Further recommendations can be found in the guidebook that will be provided to the DMZ by Thursday 21st of October.

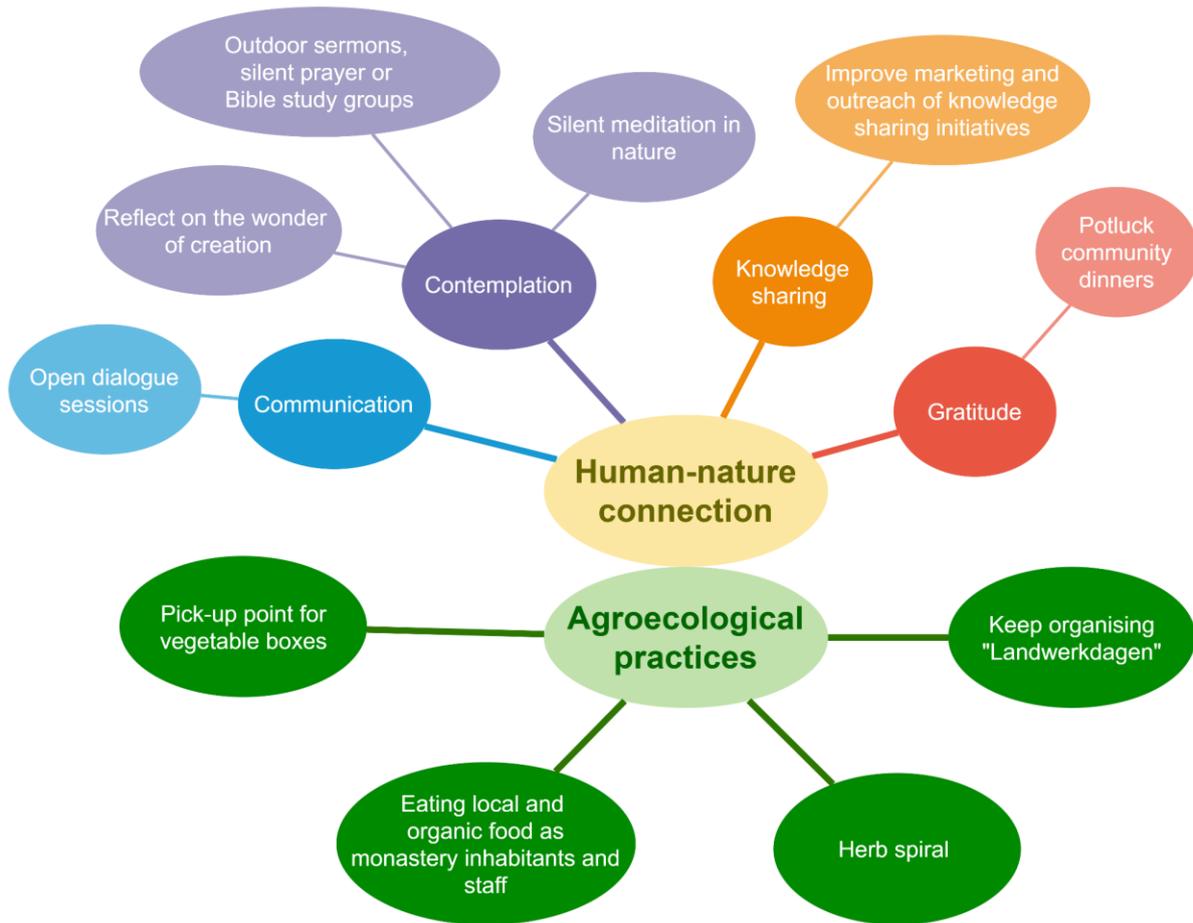


Figure 8: Visual representations of recommendations for the Dominican monastery of Zwolle.

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