

# The Vermont papers: Recreating democracy on a human scale

Frank M. Bryan, John McClaughry

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The Vermont Papers proposes a radical change in government. The authors are passionate advocates of such basic American values as self-reliance, tolerance, community aid, diversity, and liberty. Their subject is the plight of democracy in America. They argue that Vermont can show the rest of the nation how to govern itself democratically in the next century.

Bypassed by the industrial revolution, Vermont is poised to leap into the 21st century. With its tradition of strong, local town government buttressed by the growth of information technology, Vermont is ready to make a breakthrough toward a postmodern, human-scale democracy. Bryan and McClaughry propose a system of government through bio-regionally based shires that will become new and vital little republics.

Power will devolve from the state to the shires, with each shire small enough to be known, governed, and loved by each one of its citizens. The state's responsibilities will focus, instead, on such issues as air and water pollution, civil rights and liberties, and relations with other states and nations. The authors give detailed, specific recommendations, and show clearly how the new democracy will work.



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