

A SELECTION FROM *THE ENERGY OF SLAVES: OIL AND THE NEW SERVITUDE* ANDREW NIKIFORUK

Facilitator's Note: Based on the age-level of the group, you may want to preface this exercise by reviewing the few terms that are in italics and defined below. If you have time, you can quiz them about their prior knowledge of the terms or just point out the definitions.

"THE NEW ABOLITIONISTS"

Around the world, families and groups of individuals are walking away in ever growing numbers from petroleum and the **inanimate** slave culture of frantic consumption. They are exchanging quantity for quality and relearning the practical arts.

Those seeking liberty eat slowly, travel locally, plant gardens, work ethically, build communities, share tools and **eschew** bigness in economic and political life.

Above all, they are relearning what it means to live within their means, with grace. Like the Greeks long before them, these new abolitionists have come to understand that the indiscriminate spending of energy is mere **Promethean hubris**.

Unqualified power diminishes life, the only true wealth we share. By burying the chains, we can find a new livelihood and an old freedom.

From 'Living with Limits, Living Well! Hints for neighbours on an endangered planet' by William F Ryan, SJ, and Janet Somerville, with Anne O'Brien, gsic, and Anne-Marie Jackson, produced by the Jesuit Social Forum. Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Ottawa, 2014. p. 49.

TERMS:

Abolitionist: person who struggles to put an end to practices or laws that are harmful to society

Inanimate: not living

Eschew: to avoid something because you do not think it is right

Promethean: refers to Prometheus, a daring figure in Greek mythology who was punished for stealing fire (energy) from the gods for humankind

Hubris: a foolish amount of pride or self-confidence