

According to Shelby Tilford, director of Earth Science and application for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the technology should be available within the next few years to permit scientists from a wide range of disciplines to study the Earth as a single ecosystem.

"We are just getting to the point where this is possible," Tilford said in a Feb. 17, 1985 story in the *Los Angeles Times*.

Tilford is one of about 30 scientists who met early in February at the NASA Jet Propulsion Lab to map strategy for answering questions with profound global implications — questions that have defied efforts to resolve them on a piecemeal basis. The committee of which he is a part was set up two years ago to determine the feasibility of a major effort to study the Earth as a single system. At issue, said Committee Chairman Francis Bretherton, is the survivability of the planet. Bretherton is an oceanographer with the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colo. He describes the earth as a life support system so complex and so dramatically changed by humans that "we may be pushing up against the boundaries that make life possible. . . but we don't know where those boundaries are."