

Resources for Creation Care

I. A Biblical Foundation for Creation Care: Scriptures Categorized According to Themes

A. God Created Everything

Genesis 1:1-2:3

Job 12:7-10

Job 33:4

Job 38-41

Psalms 104

Isaiah 40:26

Mark 13:19

B. God Loves Creation

Genesis 9:8-17

Psalms 136

John 3:16

C. God Has an Ongoing Relationship with Creation

Numbers 22:22-39

D. God Owns Creation

Leviticus 25:23-24

Deuteronomy 10:14

Psalms 24; 89:9-11; 95:4-5

E. Creation Has a Relationship with God/Creation Praises God

1 Chron. 16:32-33 Ps 19:1-4; 65:12-13; 66:1-4; 96:11-13; 98:7-9; 148:3-4,7-13; 150:6

Isaiah 55:12-13

1 Corinthians 10:26

Revelation 5:13

F. A Relationship with Creation Is Connected to a Relationship with God

Genesis 4:10-11

1 Kings 4:29-34

Ecclesiastes 3:18-22

Romans 1:20

G. Caring for Creation and Caring for the Poor Are Interconnected

Exodus 23:10-11

Leviticus 19:9-10; 25:1-17

H. Human Obedience/Disobedience to God's Commandments Has Consequences for Creation

Deut. 11:13-17; 28:4,18

Isaiah 24:1-3; 44:1-5

Hosea 4:1-3

Micah 7:13

Zechariah 8:12

Galatians 6:7-9

I. Jesus as Part of Creation

John 1:1-10; 17:24

Colossians 1:15-17

Hebrews 1:2

J. Jesus Prays in Deserted Places, Mountains, and Wilderness

Mark 1:35

Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:28; 22:31-41

K. Jesus as Redeemer of Creation

Mark 16:15

John 12:47

Romans 8:18-23

Ephesians 1:10

Colossians 1:19-20

L. Future Vision of a New Creation

Isaiah 11:1-16

Ezekiel 17:22-24; 36:33-36

2 Corinthians 5:17-19

Revelation 21:1-22:7

M. Human Response: A Simple, Equitable Life for All

Exodus 16

Proverbs 6:6-8

Matthew 6:25-34

Deuteronomy 2:7

Ezekiel 34:11-31

Matthew 6:25-34

Nehemiah 9:20-21

Micah 4:1-4

Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-36

II. John Wesley on God's Creation

“By acquainting ourselves with subjects in natural philosophy, we enter into a kind of association with nature's works, and unite in the general concert of her extensive choir. By thus acquainting and familiarizing ourselves with the works of nature, we become as it were a member of her family, a participant in her felicities; but while we remain ignorant, we are like strangers and sojourners in a foreign land, unknowing and unknown.”

John Wesley, *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation*, 1:viii.

The Christ of Creation:

“[Christ] is now the life of everything that lives in any kind or degree. He is the source of the lowest species of life, that of vegetables; as being the source of all the motion on which vegetation depends. He is the fountain of the life of animals, the power by which the heart beats, and the circulating juices flow. He is the fountain of all the life which man possesses in common with other animals. And if we distinguish the rational from the animal life, he is the source of this also.”

John Wesley, Sermon 77, “Spiritual Worship,” §II.3, *Works* 3:95.

On Stewardship of Creation:

“We are now God's stewards. We are indebted to him for all we have.... A steward is not at liberty to use what is lodged in his hands as *he* pleases, but as his master pleases.... He is not the owner of any of these things but barely entrusted with them by another... now this is exactly the case of everyone with relation to God. We are not at liberty to use what God has lodged in our hands as *we* please, but as God pleases, who alone is the possessor of heaven and earth and the Lord of every creature.... [God] entrusts us with [this world's goods] on this express condition, that we use them only as our Master's goods, and according to the particular directions which he has given us in his Word.”

John Wesley, Sermon 51, “The Good Steward,” §II.1, *Works* 2:283-84.

On Finding God in Creation:

“The pure of heart see all things full of God. They see him in the firmament of heaven, in the moon walking in brightness, in the sun when he rejoiceth as a giant to run his course. They see him ‘making the clouds his chariots, and walking upon the wings of the wind.’ They see him ‘preparing rain for the earth,’ ‘and blessing the increase of it.’”

John Wesley, Sermon 23, “Sermon on the Mount, III,” §I.1, *Works* 1:513.

III. Historical Voices on God’s Creation

St. Irenaeus of Lyons (129-203)

“For even creation reveals Him who formed it, and the very work made suggests Him who made it, and the world manifests Him who ordered it. The Universal Church, moreover, through the whole world, has received this understanding from the Apostles themselves.”

St. Athanasius (297-373)

“About the ‘Book of Creation,’ he says, ‘the creatures are like letters proclaiming in loud voices to their Divine Master and Creator the harmony and order of things.’ For this reason, God gave creation such order as is found therein, so that while He is by nature invisible, men might yet be able to know Him through His works.”

St. Basil the Great (329-379)

“I want creation to penetrate you with so much admiration that wherever you go, the least plant may bring you a clear remembrance of the Creator.... One blade of grass or one speck of dust is enough to occupy your entire mind in beholding the art with which it has been made.”

St. John Chrysostom (347-407)

“One way of coming to knowledge of God is that which is provided by the whole of creation; and another, is that which is offered by conscience....”

St. Augustine (354-430)

“Some people, in order to discover God, read books. But there is a great book: the very appearance of created things. Look above you! Look below you! Note it. Read it. God, whom you want to discover, never wrote that book with ink. Instead He set before your eyes the things that He had made. Can you ask for a louder voice than that?”

St. Maximus the Confessor (580-662)

“If, instead of stopping short at the outward appearance which visible things present to the senses, you seek with your intellect to contemplate their inner essences, seeing them as images of spiritual realities or as the inward principles of sensible objects, you will be taught that nothing belonging to the visible world is unclean. For by nature all things were created good.”

St. John of Damascus (675-749)

“The whole earth is a living icon of the face of God.”

Johannes Scotus Eriugena (c. 815-877)

“Christ wears ‘two shoes’ in the world: scripture and nature. Both are necessary to understand the Lord, and at no stage can creation be seen as separation of things from God.”

St. Bonaventure (1221-1274)

“Throughout the entire creation, the wisdom of God shines forth from Him and in Him, as in a mirror containing the beauty of all forms and lights and as in a book in which all things are written according to the deep secrets of God.... Truly, whoever reads this book will find life and will draw salvation from the Lord.”

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

“Any error about creation also leads to an error about God.”

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

“God writes the Gospel, not in the Bible alone, but also on trees, and in the flowers and clouds and stars.”

John Calvin (1509-1564)

“It is the wisdom of men to search out God’s works, and to set their minds wholly upon them. And God has also ordained the world to be like a theater upon which to behold his goodness.”

Jacob Boehme (1575-1624)

“Everything we see in nature is manifested truth; only we are not able to recognize it unless truth is manifest within ourselves....”

Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821-1881)

“Love all of God’s creation, the whole of it and every grain of sand. Love every leaf, every ray of God’s light! Love the animals. Love the plants; love everything. If you love everything, you will soon perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love.”

George Washington Carver (1864-1943)

“Reading about nature is fine, but if a person walks in the woods and listens carefully, he can learn more than what is in books, for they speak with the voice of God.”

IV. Sermon Suggestions, Liturgy, Prayers

For sermons, use the scriptures in Section I above and refer to the headings for the creation-care theme of the scriptures.

Supplemental Prayers Honoring God’s Creation:

“How wonderful, O Lord, are the works of your hands! The heavens declare Your glory, the arch of sky displays Your handiwork. In Your love You have given us the power to behold the beauty of Your world robed in all its splendor. The sun and the stars, the valleys and hills, the rivers and lakes all disclose Your presence. The roaring breakers of the sea tell of Your awesome might; the beasts of the field and the birds of the air bespeak Your wondrous will. In Your goodness You have made us able to hear the music of the world. The voices of loved ones reveal to us that You are in our midst. A divine voice sings through all creation.” – a Jewish prayer, found on page 57 of *Earth Prayers From Around the World: 365 Prayers, Poems, and Invocations for Honoring Earth*, edited by Elizabeth Roberts & Elias Amidon, 1991.

“O Lord, Thou art on the sandbanks, as well as in the midst of the current; I bow to Thee. Thou art in the little pebbles, as well as in the calm expanse of the sea; I bow to Thee. O all-pervading Lord, Thou art in the barren soil, and in crowded places; I bow to Thee.” – Sukla Yajur, Veda XVI, found on page 59 of *Earth Prayers From Around the World: 365 Prayers, Poems, and Invocations for Honoring Earth*, edited by Elizabeth Roberts & Elias Amidon, 1991.

“Ancient sun, eternally young, giver of life and source of energy, In coal and oil, in plant and wind and tide, in spiritual light and human embrace, You kindle the heavens, you shine within us (for we are suns with hearts afire--we light the world as you light the sky and find clouds within whose shadows are dark); We give thanks for your rays, and clouds your rays draw up, for the sky route you travel faithfully as we traverse this globe, For our journeys of earth which draw us together, for our journeys of dream which sustain us when apart. Ancient of Days, you rule the nations, our birth and death: our journeys you have wrought. Loam we become for your fertile spirit. Your cosmic light penetrates our depths; In your majesty we are bound to one another. We gather this morning as did people of old with joys and woes, varied gifts and diverse needs. We offer you these in thanksgiving for life and share them through your generations on earth.” – by Congregation of Abraxas found on page 140 of *Earth Prayers From Around the World: 365*

Prayers, Poems, and Invocations for Honoring Earth, edited by Elizabeth Roberts & Elias Amidon, 1991.

“Hail Mother, who art the earth, hallowed by thy soil, rocks and flora that nourish and support all life. Blessed be thy wind that gives us breath and thy waters that quench, bathe and refresh all living things. Holy Earth--as one--we praise your majesty, grace and wonder.” – by Bill Faherty, found on page 157 of *Earth Prayers From Around the World: 365 Prayers, Poems, and Invocations for Honoring Earth*, edited by Elizabeth Roberts & Elias Amidon, 1991.

“Lord, may we love all your creation, all the earth and every grain of sand in it. May we love every leaf, every ray of your light. May we love the animals: you have given them the rudiments of thought and joy untroubled. Let us not trouble it; let us not harass them, let us not deprive them of their happiness, let us not work against your intent. For we acknowledge unto you that all is like an ocean, all is flowing and blending, and that to withhold any measure of love from anything in your universe is to withhold that same measure from you. Amen.” – a prayer spoken by Fyodor Dostoyevsky

“O Lord, One tiny bit of water rests on the palm of my hand. I bring it to you and with it I bring the whole ocean. This tiny drop has the power to ease the burning thirst of men; when spread on the earth, to give life to the seed and the future harvest; when poured on the fire to quench the blaze. A tiny drop of water can cleanse the whole of my impurity when blessed by your forgiveness. But, O Lord, more than all this, this tiny drop of water passed over my head is the symbol of my birth in You.” – by Sr. Ishpriya R.S.C.J., found on page 164 of *Earth Prayers From Around the World: 365 Prayers, Poems, and Invocations for Honoring Earth*, edited by Elizabeth Roberts & Elias Amidon, 1991.

“Waters, carry far away all of this that has gone bad in me, either what I have done in malicious deceit or whatever lie I have sworn to.” – part of a Hindu prayer, found on page 153 of *Earth Prayers From Around the World: 365 Prayers, Poems, and Invocations for Honoring Earth*, edited by Elizabeth Roberts & Elias Amidon, 1991.

“Now Talking God, With your feet I walk, I walk with your limbs, I carry forth your body, For me your mind thinks, Your voice speaks for me, Beauty is before me, And beauty is behind me, Above and below me hovers the beautiful, I am surrounded by it, I am immersed in it, In my youth I am aware of it, And in old age I shall walk quietly, The beautiful trail.” – a Native American prayer found on page 32 of *Earth Prayers From Around the World: 365 Prayers, Poems, and Invocations for Honoring Earth*, edited by Elizabeth Roberts & Elias Amidon, 1991.

“O Most High, omnipotent, Lord God, to you belong praise, glory, honor, and all blessing. Be praised... for our brother the sun, who brings us the day and the light, who is fair, and radiant with a very great splendor. Praised be our Lord, for our sister the moon, and for the stars which you have set clear and lovely in heaven... for our brother the wind, and for air and clouds, calms and all weather... for our sister water, who serves us and is humble and precious and chaste... for our brother fire, by whom you light up the night, and who is fair and merry, and very mighty and strong... for our mother the earth, who sustains us and keeps us, and brings forth various fruits, and flowers of many colors, and grass... for all those who pardon one another for your love’s sake, and who bear weakness and tribulation. Blessed are they who peaceably shall endure, walking by your most holy will, for you, O Most High, shall give them a crown. Praise

and bless the Lord, and give thanks unto God, and serve God with great humility. Amen.” – a prayer of Saint Francis, 12th century

For other prayers and liturgy suggestions, go to www.seasonofcreation.com, which has worship suggestions for lectionary years A, B, and C for a new liturgical season of creation during the month of September.

www.creationcare.org is the website for the Evangelical Environmental Network. It has great resources of all kinds for worship.

www.earthministry.org is the website for Earth Ministry. It has limited resources but they are very good.

V. Sunday School Literature/Suggestions

Use the Resource List below. Book studies are great for Sunday School classes.

VI. Resource List

A. Books

Theology and Ecology

Original Blessing: A Primer in Creation Spirituality Presented in Four Paths, Twenty-Six Themes, and Two Questions. Matthew Fox

Super, Natural Christians: How We Should Love Nature. Sally McFague

Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing. Rosemary Radford Reuther

Life Abundant: Rethinking Theology and Economy for a Planet in Peril. Sally McFague

Women Healing Earth: Third World Women on Ecology, Feminism, and Religion. Rosemary Radford Reuther

The Body of God: An Ecological Theology. Sally McFague

For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care. Steven Bouma-Prediger

God Is Green: Ecology for Christians. Ian Bradley

To Heal the Earth: A Theology of Ecology. Frederick Quinn

Nature in Grace: A Study in the Theology of Nature. Claude Y. Stewart, Jr.

Stepping Lightly: Simplicity for People and the Planet. Mark. A. Burch

The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today. Theodore Runyon

The Earth Story in Genesis. (The Earth Bible, Vol. 2). Norman C. Habel and Shirley Wurst

The Land Is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies. Norman C. Habel

God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation. Terence Fretheim

For Children

The Lorax. Dr. Seuss

Dear Children of the Earth. Schim Shimmel

Old Turtle. Douglas Wood and Cheng-Khee Chee

Old Turtle and the Broken Truth. Douglas Wood and Jon J Muth

The Beautiful World that God Made. Rhonda Gowler Greene and Anne Wilson

Education/Teaching Resources

Caring for God's Earth: Becoming the People of God. J. Richard Peck (Cokesbury)
Green Guidance: How to Plan Environmentally Responsible Events. Women's
Division UMC
Greening Congregations Handbook. Tanya Marcovna Barnett. Earth Ministry (see website
below)
Discussion Course on Choices for Sustainable Living. Northwest Earth Institute
(www.nwei.org)
Caring for All Creation in the Home. Earth Ministry (see website below)
Caring for All Creation on the Road. Earth Ministry (see website below)
Caring for All Creation at the Table. Earth Ministry (see website below)

Creation-Centered Spirituality

Earth's Echo: Sacred Encounters with Nature. Robert M. Hamma
*Earth and All the Stars: Reconnecting With Nature Through Hymns, Stories, Poems, and
Prayers from the World's Great Religions and Cultures.* Anne W. Rowthorn

Native American Creation-Centered Spirituality

All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life. Winona LaDuke
*Mother Earth Spirituality: Native American Paths to Healing Ourselves and Our
World.* Ed McGaa, Eagle Man, illustrated by Marie N. Buchfink

Classics

Silent Spring. Rachel Carson
A Sand County Almanac: With Essays on Conservation from Round River. Aldo Leopold

Biology/Science Related

Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge. Edward O. Wilson
*Life Stories: World-Renowned Scientists Reflect on their Lives and the Future of Life on
Earth.* Edited by Heather Newbold
Biology and Christian Ethics: New Studies in Christian Ethics. Stephen R. L. Clark
*Earth's Insights: A Multicultural Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin
to the Australian Outback.* J. Baird Callicott
Genes, Genesis and God: Values and Their Origins in Natural and Human History. Holmes
Rolston III
Discordant Harmonies: A New Ecology for the Twenty-first Century. Daniel Botkin
Ribbon of Sand: The Amazing Convergence of the Ocean and the Outer Banks. John
Alexander and James Lazell

Environmental Economics/Policy/Politics

*Managing for the Environment: Understanding the Legal, Organizational, and Policy
Challenges.* Rosemary O'Leary, Daniel J. Fiorino, Robert F. Durant, Paul S. Weiland
Democracy, Dialogue, and Environmental Disputes. Bruce A. Williams, Albert R. Matheny
Business and the Environment. Harvard Business Review
Competitive Environmental Strategy: A Guide To The Changing Business Landscape.
Andrew J. Hoffman
The Ecology of Commerce: A Declaration of Sustainability. Paul Hawken

God the Economist: The Doctrine of God and Political Economy. M. Douglas Meeks
Gaia's Wager: Environmental Movements and the Challenge of Sustainability. Gary Bryner

Globalization

Globalization. Malcolm Waters
The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization. Thomas. L. Friedman
Globalization at What Price? Economic Change and Daily Life. Pamela K. Brubaker

Autobiography

Coming Out of the Woods: The Solitary Life of a Maverick Naturalist. Wallace Kaufman
Ecology of a Cracker Childhood: The World As Home. Janisse Ray

Novels

Prodigal Summer. Barbara Kingsolver

Other

Response Magazine: The State of the Planet. Feb 2002
Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge. Vandana Shiva
Defending the Earth: A Dialogue Between Murray Bookchin and Dave Foreman
Environmentalism: A Global History. Ramachandra Guha
State of the World 2004: Special Focus The Consumer Society. The Worldwatch Institute

B. Movies

A Civil Action (1999) with John Travolta: water pollution

China Syndrome (1979) with Jane Fonda, Michael Douglas, Jack Lemmon: problems in a nuclear power plant

Erin Brockovich (2000) with Julia Roberts: suit against electric company for polluting

Fire Down Below (1997) with Steven Seagal: toxic waste dumping in Appalachia

Gorillas in the Mist (1988) with Sigourney Weaver: Dian Fossey and Mountain Gorillas

Silkwood (1983) with Cher, Meryl Streep, Kurt Russell: radiation contamination

Danger Zone (1996) with Ron Silver: hazardous waste

Free Willy (1993) about a whale

Hackers (1995) plot to dump oil in oceans

On Deadly Ground (1994) with Steven Seagal: possible Alaska oil spills

The Day After Tomorrow (2004) global warming

Hoot (2006) based on the novel by Carl Hiaasen: threat to endangered owls

An Inconvenient Truth

Happy Feet

Kilowatt Ours: A Plan to Re-Energize America

Lighten Up

The Great Warming

C. Websites

Environmental Defense Fund	www.environmentaldefense.org
National Wildlife Federation	www.nwf.org
Sierra Club	www.sierraclub.org
U. N. Environment Program	www.unep.org
World Wildlife Fund	www.panda.org
UMC General Board of Church and Society	www.umc-gbcs.org
UMC Women's Division	www.gbgm-umc.org/umw
Earth Ministry	www.earthministry.org
Web of Creation	www.webofcreation.org
U. S. Environmental Protection Agency	www.epa.gov
EPA Energy Star Program	www.energystar.gov
Natural Resources Defense Council	www.nrdc.org
Children's Environmental Health Network	www.cehn.org
Nature Conservancy	www.nature.org
National Council of Churches	www.nccusa.org
NCC Eco-Justice Programs	www.nccecojustice.org
National Religious Partnership for the Env.	www.nrpe.org
New Community Project	www.newcommunityproject.org
North American Coalition for Christianity and Ecology	www.nacce.org
Chesapeake Bay Foundation	www.cbf.org
Season of Creation	www.seasonofcreation.com
Virginia Interfaith Power and Light	http://vaipl.org/
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy	www.VirginiaInterfaithCenter.org
Virginia Conservation Network	www.vcnva.org
Chlorine Free Products Association	www.chlorinefreeproducts.org
Evangelical Environmental Network	www.creationcare.org
Alternatives	www.simpleliving.org
Eco-Justice Ministries	www.eco-justice.org
Grist Magazine	www.grist.org
Carbon Footprint	www.carbonfootprint.com

Harvard Forum on Religion and Ecology
Green Home (plates, cups, etc.)
Carbon Fund
Environmental Mutual Funds

<http://environment.harvard.edu/>
www.greenhome.com
www.carbonfund.org
www.paxworld.com

VII. Practical Solutions

Drive less (walk, bike, and carpool) and when you do drive, drive fuel efficient cars instead of SUVs.

Conserve energy at home to reduce nitrogen, sulfur, and mercury emissions of power plants.

- Open windows instead of turning A/C on.

- If you have storm windows, close them when heat or A/C is on.

- Turn down the temperature of your water heater.

- Add an insulation blanket to your water heater.

- Better yet, replace your water heater with an instant water heater or a solar water heater.

- Use compact florescent light bulbs.

- Keep thermostat in low to mid 60s in winter, mid to upper 70s in summer.

- Wear lots of clothes in winter, few in summer.

- Install water saving showerheads, take shorter “navy” showers.

- Add insulation to your attic.

- Caulk around windows.

- Add storm windows and doors if you don’t already have them.

- Install a programmable thermostat.

- Update your heating/cooling system to a more efficient one.

- Replace your appliances with ultra-efficient ones (Energy Star).

- Install a “solar” clothes dryer (clothesline).

- Turn the heated dry cycle off on your dishwasher.

- Buy a solar oven for cooking.

- If you build a new home, use passive solar principles and make it a small home.

- Turn lights off when not needed.

- Eliminate phantom loads.

- Eat foods grown locally (best in your backyard) to cut down on energy consumed to bring your food from thousands of miles away.

- Install solar electric panels on your house.

Conserve water at home.

- Turn off the water when brushing teeth and shaving.

- Take showers instead of baths.

- Install low-flow showerheads.

- Take “navy” showers: turn water off when soaping up.

- When running water waiting for it to get warm, collect it in a bucket for watering plants, flushing toilet, etc.

- Plant native plant species that require less water.

- Diminish the size of your lawn with plant beds so you don’t have to water your lawn so much.

Buy a water-conserving toilet.

Use rain barrels to collect rain water for watering your landscape.

Do not use chemical fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides on your lawn; if you insist on fertilizer, use organic.

Eat fewer oysters and crabs from the Bay.

Recycle to reduce landfill quantities as runoff ends up in the Bay.

Eat more locally grown food; either grow it yourself or participate in a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture).

Make 2-sided copies instead of two sheets of paper copied on only one side.

Be careful printing from web sites as it usually prints several pages more than what you want.

No Styrofoam; it takes 10 times as much water to manufacture 1 Styrofoam cup as it does to wash 1 coffee cup.

Take your own coffee cup and water container with you wherever you go.

Buy a water filter and filter your own instead of buying bottled water to keep our landfills from filling up with empty plastic water bottles.

Conduct an energy audit of your church (www.energystar.gov) to discover lots of ways to save energy and money.

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