

God's Earthkeepers:

"The Earth is The Lord's, and everything in it"



**BIBLICAL ACTION AND REFLECTION
ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

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God's Earthkeepers:

**BIBLICAL ACTION AND REFLECTION
ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

by William van Geest

WHY THIS BOOK?

THE RAIN FORESTS BURN. COD STOCKS DISAPPEAR. THE OZONE LAYER DISSIPATES.

Like other Canadians, Christians are deeply disturbed by the environmental destruction they see and hear about.

But despite their concern, many Christians also feel ambivalent about environmental issues. Some may not be able to see a relationship between such issues and their faith. Others may believe the national world is not of concern to God. And still others link any involvement in environmental issues to acceptance of unbiblical ways of thinking about nature, often loosely called “New Age” thinking.

Yet the Bible speaks powerfully to today’s environmental issues. And it states clearly our responsibilities as keepers of God’s earth.

This booklet is an attempt to look at what the Bible says.

We hope it will challenge you to see environmental involvement as a genuine opportunity to serve our Creator and Savior.



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I. FROM BEGINNING TO END

SIX BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES ABOUT CREATION

“The creation...is not to be well-treated because it is sacred or because it should be worshipped, but because God made it and called it good.”

Fred Van Dyke¹

*In the beginning...God created the heavens and the earth... Gen. 1:1
Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth... I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God... See, the home of God is among mortals... Rev. 21:1-3*

The Bible begins and ends with the creation. These most beautiful and awesome words in the Scriptures remind us of the greatness of God’s original purpose in creation and point us to his plan to establish a new creation. Everything in the Bible takes place between these bookends.

As we follow the story, six key principles emerge to help us understand God’s relationship—and ours—with creation.

GOD LOVES ALL OF CREATION.

*O Lord, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. You set the earth on its foundations, so that it shall never be shaken. You make springs gush forth in the valleys... The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly... The young lions [seek] their*

food from God. ...the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.

Psalm 104:24, 5, 10, 16, 21, 13

God’s love and care for creation is evident throughout the Scriptures. He feeds the “birds of the air,” “clothes the grass of the field” (Matt. 6:26-30) and cares for every sparrow that falls (Matt. 10:29). God gives his creatures “their food in due season...when you open your hand, they are filled with good things” (Ps. 104:27, 28).

It is also clear that God delights in his entire creation, not just the parts relevant or useful to people. Psalm 24 says, “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it...” Even before the creation of humans, Genesis tells us that God saw the goodness in each new part of creation (Gen. 1:25). And God made a covenant with Noah and with every living creature (Gen. 9:10).

God’s ongoing care for what he has made—and the fact that he himself became part of his creation in the incarnation of Christ—should remove any inclination we may have to view the material world as worthless and evil. All things in heaven and on earth, spiritual and physical, are his handiwork.

REFLECTION AND ACTION FOR EARTHKEEPERS

See what God sees.

“And God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.” Genesis 1:31

The next time you’re in a local park or another natural setting, sit down and see that goodness for yourself. Notice the details on the bark of trees, examine the intricacies of insect shapes, trace the patterns of sunlight and shade. It is in these things that God takes delight.

¹ Fred G. Van Dyke, “Ecology and the Christian Mind: Christians and the Environment in a New Decade,” in *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, Vol. 43, no. 3, September 1991, p.174.

CREATION REVEALS GOD.

As awesome and wonderful as the creation is, however, we don't worship it. It always points us beyond itself to the Creator as the one to be praised and worshipped.

In fact, creation itself worships God. The Scriptures use human images to describe how the natural world responds to its Maker in boundless enthusiasm and joy.

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it... Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord; for he is coming, for he is coming to judge the earth.

Psalm 96:11-13

God has such a high regard for the world he made that he uses it to tell us about himself.

Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made.

Romans 1:20

God also used the creation to show us his Son. When God came into the creation as Jesus Christ, he "became flesh," to live and die as a created human being.

WE ARE AN INSEPERABLE PART OF GOD'S CREATION.

Humans were not created separate from the physical creation, over and above it. Rather, we are part of it. We were created by God along with all the other things and living creatures.

...the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life...

Genesis 2:7

The physical creation, including our own bodies, is not a necessary evil that must carry us only as far as our death. Our place, our home, is in creation; we are inescapably part of it. After the resurrection, our "imperishable" and "heavenly bodies" (I Cor. 15:40-44) will, like that of the resurrected Christ, still be physical bodies.



See his creation, see him.

A Christian camp director once said: "We don't do nature study at our camp because our first goal is to help kids to know God."

- *Discuss the view of God's relationship to the natural world that this statement reflects.*
- *Do you agree with this view? Why or why not?*
- *Read Romans 1:20. What does studying the natural world tell us about God?*

Listen to Jesus.

Read the story of Jesus calming the storm in Matthew 8:23—27. Notice the use of the words: Jesus "rebuked" the wind and the waves; the disciples marvel that they "obey" Jesus.

The account does not say that Jesus had "power over" the storm. Nor does it say Jesus "caused" or "made" the storm stop. Instead, Jesus speaks words usually used between people, as if the storm could actually hear him.

- *Why do you think the Gospel writer uses this language?*
- *What does this event tell us about God's relationship to the natural world?*

WE HAVE A SPECIAL ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN CREATION.

While we are a part of creation, we are creatures with a special role within it. Adam and Eve were given a special blessing and task:

Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have domination over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth...

Genesis 1:26

...you have made them [human beings] a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honour. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet...

Psalms 8: selections

Whether we choose to accept the responsibility or not, God has created us as stewards of his creation. The special role assigned to humanity in the creation is defined by the fact that we bear God's image (Gen. 1:26). We reflect God's presence on the earth. Individually and collectively, we are accountable to God for what we do with and on this earth.

No other creature has this capacity to destroy creation or to enhance it. But our unique place in creation is not a license to do whatever we please. Many Old Testa-

ment laws stipulated regular withdrawal of land from human use to allow its natural capacities to be restored (Ex. 23:11; Lev. 25: 1-8, 18-22). God's intent for our use of the creation was and is to preserve its capacities, natural cycles and rhythms, and to benefit all people and other creatures.

IN OUR FALL, WE ARE ALIENATED FROM CREATION.

With the fall, Adam and Eve tried to "be like God" (Gen. 3:4) and rejected their role as God's stewards.

The result was that humans were alienated from God, each other, and the rest of creation.

...cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life... By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust and to dust you shall return.

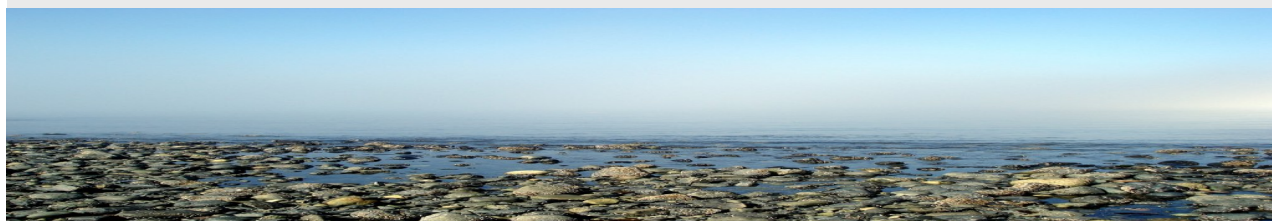
Genesis 3:17b, 19

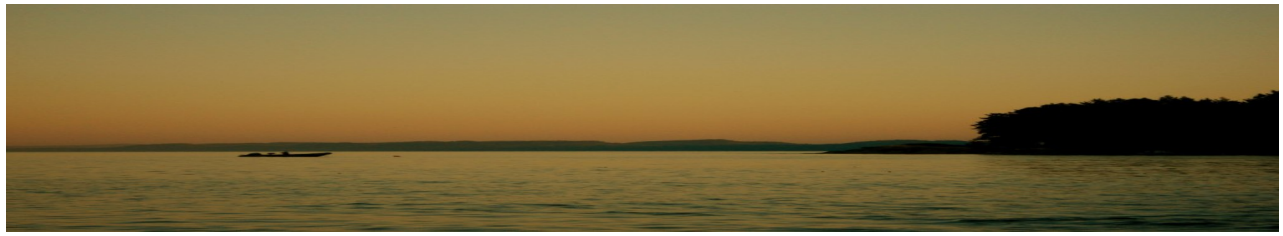
The damage these broken relationships have brought to human life and to the natural world is beyond measure: the loss of many animal species; the degradation of soil, water and air; and the poverty of many of the world's people are all a consequence.

Instead of caring for God's creation, we have exercised our "dominion" or "rule" in a destructive way.

Define dominion. Some have blamed Christianity, and particularly Genesis 1:26-28, for the damage humanity has caused to the earth.

- *What does dominion or rule mean to you in relation to the creation?*
 - *Compare Genesis 1:26-28 with Genesis 2:15. What does the second verse tell you about how God expects humanity's "rule" to be exercised?*
- tp be exercised? expects humanity's "rule" to be exercised?*





**GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION INCLUDES
THE RESTORATION OF CREATION.**

*For God so loved the world that he gave
his only Son...*

John 3:16

*For the creation waits with eager longing
for the revealing of the children of
God...the creation itself will be set free
from its bondage to decay and will obtain
the freedom of the glory of the children
of God.*

Romans 8:19,21

The Bible makes it clear that the entire creation is included in God's redemptive plan. Salvation is much bigger than the salvation of individual human beings alone. Christ came to save and restore the entire creation. The Apostle Paul says that God, through Christ, "was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:20).

Redemption in Jesus Christ means that the relationships that God created in the beginning will be restored: those between God and humanity, God and the creation, and humanity and the rest of creation. God's redeemed people will then take their rightful place in his new creation.

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new
earth...I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem,
coming down out of heaven from God...And I
heard a loud voice from the throne saying,
"See, the home of God is among mortals. He
will dwell with them as their God..."*

Revelation 21:1a,2a,3a

**IN A NUTSHELL, THE BIBLE HAS THIS
TO SAY ABOUT CREATION: GOD LOVES
IT AND USES IT TO POINT TO HIM-
SELF. HE MADE US AN INSEPARABLE
PART OF CREATION, BUT GAVE US A
SPECIAL ROLE WITHIN IT. WE HAVE
ABUSED OUR ROLE, AND DAMAGED
GOD'S CREATION. BUT IN HIS PLAN
OF SALVATION, HE WILL REDEEM
CREATION ALONG WITH US TO OUR
PROPER PLACE WITHIN IT.**

**WITH THESE PRINCIPLES, WE HAVE A
SOLID BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FROM
WHICH WE CAN ENGAGE TODAY'S ENVIRONMENTAL
ISSUES AND GET INVOLVED IN EFFORTS TO
PRESERVE GOD'S CREATION.**

You decide: destruction or transformation?

Christians differ on what will happen to the creation after the final judgment. Some say it will be entirely destroyed and a new earth will be created; others say the present earth will be fundamentally transformed into the new earth, but it will remain this earth.

John Wesley, the 18th century church leader, said that the deliverance of creation from the "bondage of decay" (Rom. 8:21) will occur, "not by annihilation; annihilation is not deliverance."

Review this quote in light of various Bible passages on the subject, including Matthew 5:5; Romans 8:18-24; Hebrews 1:10-12; 2 Peter 3:3-13; and Revelation 21:1-5.

II. SURVIVAL AND SPIRITUALITY

OUR CRUCIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH CREATION

“It would be ludicrous to suppose that God first created the earth and then handed it over to use to be destroyed.”

John Stott²

As the twentieth century draws to a close, we are re-discovering the importance of our relationship with the creation. Not only do we depend for our physical survival on the world God has made—we need the creation for our spiritual health as well.

But we are often blind to our dependence. From the food we eat, to the clothes we wear, to the buildings we inhabit, to the vehicles we drive, our technological abilities have allowed us to isolate ourselves from nature in its created state. We cannot grasp the power nature holds over us—and we miss the spiritual benefits that contact with it offers.

AT THE MERCY OF THE SEASONS.

For us, changing seasons may mean a change in wardrobe and different recreational activities. But work and family life don't change dramatically from one season to the next. Prior to the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century, however, (and today still in many parts of the world) most of daily life was governed by the patterns and cycles of nature.

Despite the hardships this situation created, most of the world's cultures and religions saw it as normal: humans were part of the

natural order. For European Christians in the medieval period, everything, human and non-human, living and non-living, had a unique place in the unchanging and harmonious order created by God. In their view of the Scriptures, they were masters of the world, but always within their place in Creation—unique, to be sure, but not separate. The notion that humans could modify God's unchanging design would have seemed absurd.

In recent centuries, however, a dramatic and unprecedented shift in our relationship to the natural order began to take place in the western world.

THE DRIVE FOR MASTERY.

With the emergence of modern science and technology, medieval ideas of dominion from within creation were replaced with concepts of human mastery and conquest. The spiritual and mysterious universe became a “resource” to be molded to suit human needs, and controlling nature instead of being controlled by it was seen to promise an end to disease, ignorance and poverty. As more and more processes came between the natural world and us, it seemed that life no longer depended on natural forces, but only on human produc-

REFLECTION AND ACTION FOR EARTHKEEPERS

Make a balance sheet.

In the last few decades, we have seen the impacts of our attempts to conquer creation increase at an unprecedented pace and scale. Think about what has changed in your lifetime.

- *What are the most destructive changes you have witnessed? What are the most valuable changes?*
- *Are you disturbed or encouraged by these changes?*
- *How do you think God views our attempts to conquer creation?*

² John Stott, “Our Human Environment,” in *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1990), p. 124.

Today, our accelerating ability to use—and abuse—creation for our own ends is having an enormous impact. The pollution of air, water and land; the loss of farmland and animal habitat; and the extinction of plant and animal species all have reached critical levels in many parts of the world. Many scientists now believe that we have the capacity to alter the fundamental forces of nature, such as changing our climate through large increases in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

FROM CONQUEST TO EARTHKEEPING

Only in the past thirty years has the promise of unending progress lost its luster. Optimism about what we can do has declined significantly. We have realized that, in the process of having “subdued” creation, we have lost our relationship with the natural world. “Conquest” has turned out to be an empty dream.

But there is an “up-side”: as we have witnessed both destruction and progress, the

limits and possibilities of our stewardship have also become more clear. As our technology has developed, we have become more aware of the creation as a whole. We can see its limitations and its potential in a way that our ancestors could not imagine.

We stand, therefore, at a watershed in human history: we are no longer at the mercy of the seasons, yet our continued drive for mastery may lead to disastrous environmental consequences. We have great power over nature at our disposal, but the way in which we wield that power will have enormous consequences.

The situation presents us with an unparalleled opportunity to fulfill our biblical calling as stewards. Knowing our limits and using technology wisely, we can find the biblical balance between being mastered by and being masters over creation. We can become “earthkeepers” as God truly intended, caring for his creation rather than conquering—and destroying—it.

Take a hard look at conquest.

Our ability to conquer disease and poverty has undergone a serious setback in recent times, especially in the developing world. Ask the following questions of a medical doctor and someone who works with the poor:

- *Are you confident that our technology can address our current problems of disease, environmental degradation, economic uncertainty, hunger and increasing human population?*
- *Are there problems that you think cannot be solved by technology? If so, what are they? And how should they be addressed?*



ALSO AT STAKE: OUR SPIRITUALITY

Clearly, the physical survival of humanity is at stake in the way we treat the creation. But there is a growing understanding that the created order also plays a role in our spiritual health.

It is clear that nature satisfies more than our physical needs. It inspires our art, our hymns, our poetry, even our architecture. We turn to natural settings for relaxation and recreation. Our culture and our holidays are linked to the seasons. And in a world of rapid change, nature appears to offer a permanence, a sense that we are part of something, that we belong somewhere.

But more than our culture, recreation and relaxation are tied to nature. So is the core of our spirituality. Nature connects us to an all-powerful Creator.

The outdoor camps established by Christian churches for generations have helped many people to learn about God through his creation. Many of our poems and hymns also use nature to connect us with God.

Psalm 119 points us to this deeper meaning:

The Lord exists forever; your word is firmly fixed in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; you have established the earth, and it stands fast.
(vs. 89-90)

We know God's greatness and faithful presence through the trust-worthiness of the pattern he has written into his creation. When the conflicts and tragedies of human folly obscure the presence of God, the natural world reminds us that God is still there.

It is no surprise that many today are rediscovering the spiritual power of nature. Throughout the centuries, this attraction has led many to worship the creation rather than the Creator. But the Scriptures always speak of the creation as God's handiwork, a self-revelation of the one who created it.

GOD HAS CREATED THE EARTH AS A HOME FOR HIS PEOPLE. IF WE CARE FOR IT AS STEWARDS, NOT AS CONQUERORS, IT PROVIDES ALL THAT WE NEED FOR OUR SURVIVAL.

BUT THE EARTH PROVIDES MORE. IN THE RHYTHMS AND PATTERNS THAT SUSTAIN OUR DAILY LIVES, THROUGH A GIFT OF FLOWERS FROM A FRIEND OR IN THE DISTANT BEAUTY OF STAR-FILLED NIGHTS AND SNOW-CAPPED MOUNTAINS, WE ARE SPIRITUALLY ENRICHED, EXPERIENCING THE GLORY OF THE CREATOR.

Remember the beauty.

Think about the experiences in the natural world that have had an impact on you. They could include seeing the stars or the northern lights on a clear night, the sound of flowing water, the sweep of a scenic landscape or the intricacy of a particular animal or plant.



- *Why do you think you enjoyed or appreciated what you saw?*
- *What makes such things beautiful or appealing to us? What does this attraction tell you about our relationship to the natural world?*
- *What hints of God's character do you see in your experiences?*

Take a look at the other side of the world.

Note the following statistics:

- One third of the world's population does not have access to proper sanitation.
- One billion people do not have access to clean water.
- Indoor air pollution, mostly from cooking fires, seriously affects the health of 700 million people, mainly women and children.
- *How do environmental issues in the developing world differ from those that concern people in the industrialized world?*

Debate: what's more important, the environment or the economy?

In the past few years, the cod fisheries off the east coast of Canada have completely collapsed. Over-fishing has clearly played a large part in depleting the cod stocks.

- *What does this experience tell us about the relationship between preserving the environment and keeping jobs? Can we have one without the other? Explain your answer.*

A STEWARDS HYMN

*Creator Word by whose
great power
The oceans roar
and plants do flower,
Create in us a love for Thee,
The earth, all life, the sky, the sea.*

*O Word of God Who
Earth did frame,
Who gives to man
all things to name;
Grant us the knowledge
of Thy ways
To care for Earth,
to bring Thee praise.*

*Redeemer Lord who
Earth did save,
Who lifted mankind
from the grave;
Embue us with redeeming grace
To heal the Earth,
its blighted face.*

*Creator Word, by
whose great power
The oceans roar
and plants do flower,
May we, thine heirs,
Thee emulate,
Our lives as stewards consecrate.*

*Calvin De Witt, b. 1934
To the tune of "Tallis Canon", c. 1561, 88 88
Used with permission*



III. SO WHAT CAN WE DO?

FIRST PRINCIPLES FOR EARTHKEEPERS

AN EARTHKEEPER'S BENEDICTION

May the blessing of God the Creator rest upon you and upon the earth, your home.

May the redemption of Christ Jesus transform your life on the earth.

*And may the comfort of God's Holy Spirit move over this whole earth like the breath of spring
and renew the earth and its people.*

So that all creation may praise his holy name.

Amen.

ADAPTED FROM REV. PETER SCOTT

As we look at the growing environmental devastation in our world, it is clear that we humans have not lived up to our role as stewards of God's creation. Destroyed forests, poisoned waters, fouled air, extinct species all stand as convincing testimony of our failure. As farmer and environmental essayist Wendell Berry writes: "The world, which God looked at and found entirely good, we find none too good to pollute entirely and destroy piecemeal."³ The impact of our abuse of creation will be with us for a long time, even if no more damage is done.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Clearly, steps must be taken to set the situation right. But who is responsible to take those steps—and what should they be?

In our complex and interrelated society, the answers are not easy. Take car exhaust emissions. We are responsible for the car we drive and how much we drive it. The manufacturer is responsible for the technology

used to make that car, including emission technology. The government is responsible to enact and enforce emission control regulations. City planners and developers are responsible for community designs that encourage walking, cycling and public transit instead of driving.

So who's responsibility *is* it to reduce car emissions? It's easy to point at others. But all of us are implicated—and all of us can be part of the solution.

As Christians, we can start by acting as creation stewards in our own areas of responsibility, subscribing to some basic principles that relate to our faith and the Scriptures to one of our world's most pressing problems.

These principles can provide a useful framework to guide the decisions we make daily: at home, as consumers, on the job, at church and as citizens.

REFLECTION AND ACTION FOR EARTHKEEPERS

Avoid the rich fool syndrome.

"Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." Luke 12:15

Read the parable of the "Rich Fool" in Luke 12:13-21

- *What does this parable say about God's promises for our place in the creation? Read the section in Luke 12 following this parable. Also refer back to Deut. 8:10-18.*
- *Do you see any comparisons between the way the "rich fool" responds to the blessings of this land and the way our society uses the earth's resources?*

³ Wendell Berry, "Christianity and the Survival of Creation," in *Sex, Economy, Freedom and Community* (Toronto: Random House, 1992), p. 103.

PRINCIPLE: FAITH MEANS STEWARD-SHIP.

A basic principle is that stewardship does not come after, or in addition to, our other responsibilities. It is not only about cleaning up after ourselves but also about how we deal with creation generally and how we live as stewards of God's gifts to us. The health of the earth is essential to our well-being, and God placed us here to act as his earthkeepers. That role cannot be separated from our other activities. Instead, it is about the way we live, about the choices we make.

This means that the convictions we hold about the creation and the way we deal with it are spiritual matters and cannot be separated from our faith. Our stewardship of creation is a response to God's love and blessing, his sustaining presence, his redemptive power.

Being a steward of creation is an integral part of being a Christian.

PRINCIPLE: UNLIMITED GROWTH IS A CANCER.

In contrast to stewardship, a top priority for North American society has long been an ever-expanding economy and increasing consumption. As a result, human well-being

and creation stewardship are often sacrificed to the requirements of economic production. Most of our economic activity is still based on a belief that we can continue to consume the earth's resources without limitation.

As a result, natural processes and resources continue to be destroyed. Scientists now know that we are taking more from the creation than it is able to replenish on its own; evidence of this depletion of usable and safe water, soil and air is now worldwide.

Missionary and theologian Lesslie Newbigin has written: "Growth...for the sake of growth...not determined by any overarching social purpose...is...the phenomenon which, when it occurs in the human body, is called cancer."⁴ Our ever-increasing desire for more things is just such a cancer, and the effects on human life and the natural world are simply too great.

Sometimes those effects are portrayed as the cost of economic well-being: the choice is between jobs and the environment. But while we may enjoy short-term gains from unrestrained exploitation of creation's resources, the resulting damage to the environment actually destroys jobs and reduces productivity. The near-disappearance of Canada's east coast fishery is only one example. The real choice is not between a

Make some tough decisions.

If you were...

- ...the Minister of the Environment, what laws would you introduce in your legislature to help protect the creation?
- ...the president of a large resource or manufacturing company, what would you do to ensure that your company's activities don't damage the natural world?
- ...the pastor of a church, how would you help your church and members of the congregation be responsible stewards of the creation?
- ...a teacher, what would you teach your students about caring for creation?
- ...involved in your local community, what one environmental problem would you work to have solved?

⁴ Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1986), p. 114.

growing economy and protecting the creation. It is between caring for God's creation or destroying it.

Nor are we making choices for our generation alone. When we care little for the well-being of creation, we abdicate our responsibility toward our children and future generations—and leave them the legacy of a poisoned and exhausted earth.

PRINCIPLE: A STEWARD LIVES SIMPLY.

If we really believe and understand that the "earth is the Lord's" and we are its stewards, we must understand that stewardship begins at home.

As individuals, we need to ensure that our income needs and buying habits are not driven by the cancer of greed for unlimited growth. This is a stewardship principle that God requires of us. Scripture constantly challenges us to put aside riches for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

There is good reason that "reduce" is the first word in the popular environmental slogan of "reduce, reuse, recycle." Before we even create the need to reuse and recycle, we should look at our own material needs and determine how many of them are only "wants." We need to learn, along with the apostle Paul, to be "content with whatever I have" (Phil.4:11). We can do this by avoiding pressures from advertising and our peers and by avoiding consumption for the sake of status and personal security.

NONE OF US CAN ABDICATE OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS STEWARDS. WE MUST ALL FULFILL THAT GOD-GIVEN ROLE IN EVERY ASPECT OF OUR LIVES: AS CONSUMERS, AS BUSINESS PEOPLE, AS PASTORS AND TEACHERS, AS POLITICAL LEADERS AND AS THE PEOPLE WHO ELECT THOSE LEADERS AND HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE.

BUT THIS NEED NOT BE A BURDEN. STEWARDSHIP AND A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND THE CREATION IS A SOURCE OF BLESSING FOR OUR LIVES. GOD CREATED US IN RELATIONSHIP TO HIS CREATION: THROUGH IT HE PROVIDES FOR OUR NEEDS, BUT ONLY IF WE CARE FOR AND MANAGE IT RESPONSIBLY AND NOT FOR OUR OWN SAKE.

THOSE WHO ACCEPT THE MESSAGE OF SCRIPTURE MUST NOT ONLY SAY THAT GOD HAS MADE US TO BE STEWARDS OF HIS CREATION. WE MUST ALSO LIVE AS STEWARDS.

AFTER ALL, IF GOD LOVES AND CARES FOR HIS CREATION, SHOULDN'T WE?



Stewardship tips

If you don't already do so...

- *Make use of all recycling opportunities in your community, not only curbside pick-up.*
- *If you're planning to move, consider locations where you can walk or use public transit to get to work, shopping, school and church.*
- *Before buying products, think about whether you really need them. When you buy, look for products with the Environmental Choice label and avoid over-packaged products.*
- *Before discarding anything, reconsider whether it can be reused—by you or by others.*
- *Don't use chemical cleaners, fertilizers and pesticides around your home unless it is really necessary. When you must, find out whether they are biodegradable before buying them.*
- *If you have a yard, try growing as much of your own food as you can. It's fun, relaxing and good stewardship!*
- *Review your home's energy use: install adequate insulation, lower hot water temperatures, install a programmable thermostat, repair leaking faucets, turn off necessary lights.*
- *Talk to those responsible for your building at work and at church about responsible stewardship practices.*

If you need more specific help, call the nearest office of your federal or provincial environment and energy departments or contact an environmental group.

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