

## Resources for Creation Care

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

#### A. God Created It

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 It

Genesis 9:8-17

Psalms 136

John 3:16

#### C. God has an Ongoing Relationship with It

Numbers 22:22-39

#### D. God Owns It

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

1Chronicles 16:32-33

Isaiah 55:12-13

Psalms 19:1-4, 65:12-13, 66:1-4, 96:11-13, 98:7-9, 148:3-4,7-13, 150:6

1 Corinthians 10:26

Revelation 5:13

#### F. A Relationship with Creation is Connected to a Relationship with God

Genesis 4:10-11

Romans 1:20

1 Kings 4:29-34

Ecclesiastes 3:18-22

#### 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

Deuteronomy 11:13-17, 28:4,18

Hosea 4:1-3

Galatians 6:7-9

Micah 7:13

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

Zechariah 8:12

#### 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

Ephesians 1:10

John 12:47

Colossians 1: 19-20

Romans 8:18-23

#### L. Future Vision of a New Creation

Isaiah 11:1-16

2 Corinthians 5:17-19

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

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

Luke 12:6-28

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.”

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.”

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.’”

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 Damascene (675-749)

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

John Scotus Eriugena (810-877)

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 (1217-1274)

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 Dostoyevski (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 Dostoevsky

“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 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. For our brother the sun, who is our day and who brings us 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 12<sup>th</sup> century)

For other prayers and liturgy suggestions, go to [www.seasonofcreation.com](http://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](http://www.creationcare.org) is the website for the Evangelical Environmental Network. It has great resources of all kinds for worship.

[www.earthministry.org](http://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. Matthew Fox  
Super, Natural Christians. Sally McFague  
Gaia and God. Rosemary Radford Reuther  
Life Abundant. Sally McFague  
Women Healing Earth. Rosemary Radford Reuther  
The Body of God. Sally McFague  
For the Beauty of the Earth. 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. Norman Habel and Shirley Wurst  
The Land is Mine. Norman 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  
Old Turtle and the Broken Truth. Douglas Wood  
The Beautiful World that God Made. Rhonda Growler-Greene and Anne Wilson

#### **Education/Teaching Resources**

Caring for God's Earth. J. Richard Peck (Cokesbury)

Green Guidance: How to Plan Environmentally Responsible Events. Women's  
Division UMC  
Greening Congregations Handbook. 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. Robert Hamma  
Earth and All the Stars. Anne Rowthorn

### **Native American Creation-centered Spirituality**

All Our Relations. Winona Laduke  
Mother Earth Spirituality: Native American Paths to Healing Ourselves and our  
World. Ed McGaa, Eagle Man

### **Classics**

Silent Spring. Rachel Carson  
A Sand County Almanac. Aldo Leopold

### **Biology/Science Related**

Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge. Edward O. Wilson  
Life Stories: World-renowned Scientist Reflect on their Lives and the Future of  
Life on Earth  
Biology and Christian Ethics. Stephen Clark  
Earth's Insights. Baird Callicott  
Gene's, Genesis, and God. Holmes Rolston III  
Discordant Harmonies. 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. Rosemary O'Leary  
Democracy, Dialogue, and Environmental Disputes. Bruce A. Williams  
Business and the Environment. Harvard Business Review  
Competitive Environmental Strategy. Andrew J. Hoffman  
The Ecology of Commerce. Paul Hawken  
God the Economist. 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. Thomas. L. Friedman  
Globalization at What Price? Pamela K. Brubaker

## **Autobiography**

Coming Out of the Woods. The Solitary Life of a Maverick Naturalist  
Ecology of a Cracker Childhood. Janisse Ray

## **Novels**

Prodigal Summer. Barbara Kingsolver

## **Other**

Response Magazine: The State of the Planet. Feb 2002  
Biospiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge. Vandana Shiva  
Defending the Earth. Murray Bookchin and Dave Foreman  
Environmentalism: A Global History. Ramachandra Guha  
State of the World 2004. 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 & 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*

*Lighten Up*

*The Great Warmins*

## **C. Websites**

Environmental Defense Fund	<a href="http://www.environmentaldefense.org">www.environmentaldefense.org</a>
National Wildlife Federation	<a href="http://www.nwf.org">www.nwf.org</a>
Sierra Club	<a href="http://www.sierraclub.org">www.sierraclub.org</a>
U. N. Environment Program	<a href="http://www.unep.org">www.unep.org</a>
World Wildlife Fund	<a href="http://www.panda.org">www.panda.org</a>
UMC General Board of Church and Society	<a href="http://www.umc-gbcs.org">www.umc-gbcs.org</a>
UMC Women's Division	<a href="http://www.gb-gm-umc.org/umw">www.gb-gm-umc.org/umw</a>
Earth Ministry	<a href="http://www.earthministry.org">www.earthministry.org</a>
Web of Creation	<a href="http://www.webofcreation.org">www.webofcreation.org</a>
U. S. Environmental Protection Agency	<a href="http://www.epa.gov">www.epa.gov</a>
EPA Energy Star Program	<a href="http://www.energystar.gov">www.energystar.gov</a>
Natural Resources Defense Council	<a href="http://www.nrdc.org">www.nrdc.org</a>
Children's Environmental Health Network	<a href="http://www.cehn.org">www.cehn.org</a>
Nature Conservancy	<a href="http://www.nature.org">www.nature.org</a>
National Council of Churches	<a href="http://www.nccusa.org">www.nccusa.org</a>
NCC Eco-Justice Programs	<a href="http://www.nccecojustice.org">www.nccecojustice.org</a>
National Religious Partnership for the Env.	<a href="http://www.nrpe.org">www.nrpe.org</a>
New Community Project	<a href="http://www.newcommunityproject.org">www.newcommunityproject.org</a>
North American Coalition for Christianity and Ecology	<a href="http://www.nacce.org">www.nacce.org</a>
Chesapeake Bay Foundation	<a href="http://www.cbf.org">www.cbf.org</a>
Season of Creation	<a href="http://www.seasonofcreation.com">www.seasonofcreation.com</a>
Virginia Interfaith Power and Light	<a href="http://www.vipl.org">www.vipl.org</a>
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy	<a href="http://www.VirginiaInterfaithCenter.org">www.VirginiaInterfaithCenter.org</a>
Virginia Conservation Network	<a href="http://www.vcnva.org">www.vcnva.org</a>
Chlorine Free Products Association	<a href="http://www.chlorinefreeproducts.org">www.chlorinefreeproducts.org</a>
Evangelical Environmental Network	<a href="http://www.creationcare.org">www.creationcare.org</a>
Interfaith Climate Change Network	<a href="http://www.protectingcreation.org">www.protectingcreation.org</a>
Alternatives	<a href="http://www.simpleliving.org">www.simpleliving.org</a>
Eco-Justice Ministries	<a href="http://www.eco-justice.org">www.eco-justice.org</a>
Grist Magazine	<a href="http://www.grist.org">www.grist.org</a>
Carbon Footprint	<a href="http://www.carbonfootprint.com">www.carbonfootprint.com</a>
Harvard Forum on Religion and Ecology	<a href="http://www.environment.harvard.edu/religion/information/index.html">www.environment.harvard.edu/religion/information/index.html</a>
Green Home (plates, cups, etc.)	<a href="http://www.greenhome.com">www.greenhome.com</a>
Carbon Fund	<a href="http://www.carbonfund.org">www.carbonfund.org</a>
Environmental Mutual Funds	<a href="http://www.paxworld.com">www.paxworld.com</a>

## VII. Practical solutions

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

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 60's in winter; mid to upper 70's 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 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](http://www.energystar.gov)) to discover lots of ways to save energy and money