

## A BRIEF THEOLOGY OF CREATION CARE

Prepared by Rick Faw of A Rocha

### SIX MAIN PRINCIPLES

#### 1. God loves all of creation

A description of God's actions and craftsmanship

i. PS 104:1-6

God's evaluation of 'the work of his hands'

i. GEN 1:31; PS 24:1

God's admiration for his creation

i. JOB 38:4-13; MATT 6:26-29

"The world...is a whole barrelful of the apples of his eye, ..."  
from *The Third Peacock*, by Robert Farrar Capon

#### 2. Creation reveals God

A multi-voiced choir

i. ROM 1:20

ii. PS 96:11-13

iii. PS 19:1-4

"The heavens declare the glory of God"

#### 3. People are an inseparable part of creation

The blessing of creatureliness

i. GEN 2:7; ECC 3:18-21

- We share 'creatureliness' with everything that exists
- we are embedded in, bound up with, the many cycles of the biosphere (air, water, organic matter, etc.)
- This is NOT a necessary evil to be tolerated, but a glorious part of who we are that should be celebrated
- Christ, in both his transfigured and resurrected states, had a body
- we too, will have *bodies*. (see I Cor 15:40-44, Rom 8:23)

#### 4. People have a special role within and unique responsibilities for creation

The stewardship mandate that goes along with our prominent position

i. GEN 1:26-28

ii. PS 8:3-8

- *we are meant to* rule over creation, to practice dominion

iii. GEN 2:15, 19-20A

- But what is the *nature* of this rule? 3 clues:

1) imago dei: as His image bearers we represent God

on earth and so our rule should be modelled on his rule

2) Pentateuchal laws: articulate a husbanding of

creation that does not compromise its abundant fruitfulness

3) our first task is 'to work and keep'

(abad) **work, serve**; translated as ... to work, to do work in it,

to till, to cultivate, to dress, to tend, to serve

CP JOS 24:15

"But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD"

(shamar) **keep, guard**; translated as ... to keep it, to care for it,

to take care of it, to guard it

CP NUM 6:24-26

"The LORD bless you, and keep you; The LORD make his face to shine on you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up his countenance on you, And give you peace."

#### 5. In our fallen condition, we are alienated from creation

Our rebellion is the root of all forms of alienation

i. GEN 3:17-19

ii. HOS 4:1-3

- Our rejection of God compromises the proper relationships we were meant to enjoy with God, each other, and creation so that we no longer live up to our high calling as God's stewards

#### 6. God's plan of salvation includes the restoration and redemption of creation

Christ's redeeming work is all-inclusive

i. COL 1:15-20 (also JOHN 1:1-14, ACTS 17:24-28, HEBREWS 1:1-3, ROM 8:19-23)

ii. JOHN 3:16

note: the word 'world' in greek is *kosmos* (can mean universe, created order)

The scope of God's redemption story included the redemption, restoration and transposition of the entire *kosmos*

see also REV 11:18, 21:1-3

#### Conclusion

"In a nutshell, the Bible has this to say about creation: **God loves it** and uses it to point to himself. He made us an **inseparable part** of creation: but gave us a **special role** within it. We have **abused our rule**, and damaged God's creation. But in his plan of salvation, **he will redeem creation** along with us, and restore us to our proper place within it."

## BOOKS AND THEOLOGICAL RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS: FURTHER STUDY IN THE CARE OF CREATION

Compiled by Rick Faw of A Rocha, Canada

### RECOMMENDED BOOKS

**Voicing Creation's Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts**  
**Begbie, Jeremy.** Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark. 1991.

**The Care of Creation: Focusing Concern and Action**  
**Berry, R. J. ed.** Downers Grove, IL: Inter-varsity Press. 2000.

**Home Economics: Fourteen Essays**  
**Berry, Wendell.** San Francisco: North Point Press. 1987.

**The Unsettling of America: Culture & Agriculture**  
**Berry, Wendell.** New York: Avon. 1977.

**Planetwise: Dare To Care For God's World**  
**Bookless, Dave.** Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press. 2008.

**For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision of Creation Care**  
**Bouma-Prediger, Steven.** Grand Rapids, MI: Baker. 2001.

**Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement**  
**Bouma-Prediger, Steven and Brian J. Walsh.** Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. 2008.

**The Consumer's Guide to Effective Environmental Choices: Practical Advice from the Union of Concerned Scientists**  
**Brower, Michael, & Warren Leon.** New York. Three Rivers Press. 1999.

**Our Father's World: Mobilizing the Church to Care for Creation**  
**Brown, Ed.** CITY/PUB? 2006.

**Plan 3.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization**  
**Brown, Lester R.** New York: Norton. 2008.

**Modifying Creation? GM Crops and Foods: A Christian Perspective**  
**Bruce, Donald and Don Horrocks eds.** London: Paternoster Press. 2001.

**The Third Peacock: The Problem of God and Evil**  
**Capon, Robert Farrar.** This volume can be found as one part of a collection titled The Romance of the Word: One Man's Love Affair with Theology. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. 1995.

**Caring for Creation: Responsible Stewardship of God's Handiwork**  
**DeWitt, Calvin.** CITY/PUB? 1998.

**The Environment and the Christian: What Can We Learn from the New Testament?**  
**DeWitt, Calvin. ed.** Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House. 1991.

**This Place on Earth: Home and the Practice of Permanence**  
**Durning, Allan T.** Seattle: Sasquatch. 1999.

**The Weather Makers: How We are Changing the Climate and What it Means for Life on Earth**  
**Flannery, Tim.** Toronto: HarperCollins. 2005.

**Beyond Poverty and Affluence: Toward an Economy of Care**  
**Goudzwaard, Bob & Harry de Lange.** Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995.

**The One, The Three and The Many: God, Creation, and the Culture of Modernity**  
**Gunton, Colin.** Cambridge: Cambridge University. 1993.

**The Triune Creator**  
**Gunton, Colin.** Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. 1998.

**Kingfisher's Fire: A Story of Hope for God's Earth**  
**Harris, Peter.** Grand Rapids, MI: Monarch. 2008.

**Under the Bright Wings**  
**Harris, Peter.** Vancouver, BC: Regent College. 1993.

**The Ecology of Commerce: A Declaration of Sustainability**  
**Hawken, Paul.** New York: Harper Business. 1994.

**Natural Capitalism**  
**Hawken, Paul and Amory and L. Hunter Lovins.** Back Bay, MA. 2000.

**Proclaim the Wonder: Engaging Science on Sunday**  
**Hoezee, Scott E.** Grand Rapids, MI: Baker. 2003.

**Remember Creation: God's World of Wonder and Delight**  
**Hoezee, Scott E.** Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. 1998.

**I Believe in the Creator**  
**Houston, James.** Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. 1980.

**Living the Good Life on God's Good Earth**  
**Koetje, David S. ed.** Grand Rapids, MI: Faith Alive Christian Resources. 2006.

**The Best Preaching on Earth: Sermons on Caring for Creation**  
**LeQuire, Stan L. ed.** Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press. 1996.

**Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder**  
**Louv, Richard.** Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books. 2008.

**Green Revolution: Coming Together to Care for Creation**  
**Lowe, Ben.** CITY/PUB? 2009.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## **Radical Simplicity: small footprints on a finite earth**

**Merkel, Jim.** Gabriola Island, BC: New Society. 2003.

## **Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things**

**McDonough, William and Michael Braungart.** New York: North Point Press. 2002.

## **Hope, Human and Wild**

**McKibben, Bill.** Saint Paul, MN: Ruminator Books. 1995.

## **The End of Nature**

**McKibben, Bill.** Toronto: Anchor Books. 1989.

## **Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future**

**McKibben, Bill.** New York: Times Books. 2007.

## **God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God**

**Moltmann, Jurgen.** San Francisco: Harper & Row. 1985.

## **Earth Trek**

**Moyer, Joanne.** Waterloo, ON: Herald Press. 2004.

## **A Moral Climate: The Ethics of Global Warming**

**Northcutt, Michael.** London: Darton, Longman & Todd. 2007.

## **Ecological Literacy: Education and the Transition to a Postmodern World**

**Orr, David.** Albany, NY: SUNY, 1992.

## **In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto.**

**Pollan, Michael.** New York: Penguin. 2008.

## **The Earth Under Threat: A Christian Perspective**

**Prance, Ghilleen.** Glasgow: Wild Goose. 1996.

## **Down-to-Earth Christianity**

**Roberts, W. Dayton, & Paul E. Pretiz eds.** San Jose, Costa Rica: AERDO, 2000.

## **Pollution and the Death of Man: The Christian View of Ecology**

**Schaeffer, Francis A.** Wheaton, IL: Tyndale. 1970.

## **Serve God, Save the Planet**

**Sleeth, J. Matthew.** CITY? Chelsea Green, 2006.

## **Christianity, Climate Change and Sustainable Living**

**Spencer, Nick and Robert White.** London: SPCK. 2007.

## **State of the World 200?**

**Starke, Linda, ed.** (an annual publication from the Worldwatch Institute) CITY/YEAR?

## **The Sacred Balance: Rediscovering our Place in Nature**

**Suzuki, David & Amanda McConnell.** Vancouver, BC: Greystone. 2002.

## **Caring for Creation. Oxford: Bible Reading Fellowship**

**Tillet, Sarah, ed.** 2005.

## **Redeeming Creation: The Biblical Basis for Environmental Stewardship**

**Van Dyke, Fred. et al.** Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1996.

## **Ecologic: Your Guide to the Most Environmentally Friendly Information, Products and Services in Canada**

**Vasil, Adria.** CITY? Vintage Canada. 2007.

## **Our Ecological Footprint: Reducing Human Impact on the Earth**

**Wackernagel, Mathias and William Rees.** Gabriola Island, BC: New Society. 1996.

## **The Transforming Vision**

**Walsh, Brian and Richard Middleton.** YEAR/DATE/PUB?

## **Caring for Creation in Your Own Backyard**

**Wilkinson, Loren and Mary Ruth Wilkinson.** Vancouver, BC: Regent College. 1992.

## **Earthkeeping in the 90's: Stewardship of Creation**

**Wilkinson, Loren, ed.** Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. 1991.

## **The Paradise of God: Renewing Religion in an Ecological Age**

**Wirzba, Norman.** New York: Oxford University Press. 2003.

## **New Heavens, New Earth: The Biblical Picture of the Christian Hope**

**Wright, N. T.** YEAR/DATE/PUB?

## **Surprised by Hope**

**Wright, N. T.** YEAR/DATE/PUB?

## **RECOMMENDED FILMS**

### **Affluenza**

### **An Inconvenient Truth**

### **End of Suburbia**

### **Escape from Suburbia**

### **The Future of Food**

### **The Great Warming**

### **Manufactured Landscapes**

### **Planet Earth (series)**

### **The Story of Stuff**

## CARING FOR CREATION RESOURCES

Compiled by Cindy Verbeek; Updated September 2007

### Canadian Faith Based Conservation Organizations:

#### A Rocha Canada

“Inspiring Change. Caring for Creation.”

19353 16th Avenue  
Surrey, BC V3S 9V2  
Phone: (604) 542-9022  
Email: [canada@arocha.ca](mailto:canada@arocha.ca)  
Website: [www.arocha.ca](http://www.arocha.ca)

#### Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario

7660 Mill Rd., RR 4  
Guelph, ON N1H 6J1  
Phone: (519) 837-1620  
Email: [cffomail@christianfarmers.org](mailto:cffomail@christianfarmers.org)  
Website: [www.christianfarmers.org](http://www.christianfarmers.org)

#### KAIROS

129 St. Clair Ave. West  
Toronto, ON M4V 1N5  
Toll Free: (877) 403-8933  
Email: [info@kairoscanada.org](mailto:info@kairoscanada.org)  
Website: [www.kairoscanada.org](http://www.kairoscanada.org)

#### The Canadian Scientific & Christian Affiliation

Box 40086, 75 King Street S.  
Waterloo, ON N2J 4V1  
Phone: (905) 541-2086  
Email: [info@csc.ca](mailto:info@csc.ca)  
Website: [www.csc.ca](http://www.csc.ca)

#### Faith and the Common Good

An interfaith group working for ecological justice.  
47 Queen's Park Cres. E.  
Toronto, ON M5S 2C3  
Phone: (416) 978-5306  
Email: [info@faith-commongood.net](mailto:info@faith-commongood.net)  
Website: [www.faith-commongood.net](http://www.faith-commongood.net)

## DENOMINATIONAL RESOURCES

(Canadian unless otherwise noted)

#### United

The United Church has been involved with ecological justice since the 1970's. They have resources based around climate change, water and more.  
Contact: Joy Kennedy  
Program Coordinator, Ecological Justice  
(416) 231-7680 ext 4069  
Email: [jkennedy@united-church.ca](mailto:jkennedy@united-church.ca)  
Website: [www.united-church.ca/ecology](http://www.united-church.ca/ecology)

#### Anglican

There is an active environmental program in the Anglican Church with lots of great resources and programs to get involved in. Check your Diocese to find out who the environment officer is.  
#580 – 401 West Georgia Street  
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 5A1  
Phone: (604) 684-6306 ext 227  
Email: [contact@greeningspirit.ca](mailto:contact@greeningspirit.ca)  
Website: [www.greeningspirit.ca](http://www.greeningspirit.ca)

#### Catholic

Catholic Conservation Center (Based in US).  
[http://conservation.catholic.org/catholic\\_conservation\\_center.htm](http://conservation.catholic.org/catholic_conservation_center.htm)

#### Mennonite

MCC Canada has many Bible studies, resources and programmes that can help you care for creation. Contact [www.mcc.org/careforcreation](http://www.mcc.org/careforcreation)

#### Mennonite Creation Care Network (Based in US)

Box 263  
Wolf Lake, IN 46796  
Phone: (260) 799-5869  
Email: Luke Gascho at [lukeag@goshen.edu](mailto:lukeag@goshen.edu)  
Website: [www.mennocreationcare.org](http://www.mennocreationcare.org)

#### Christian Reformed Church of America

Creation Stewardship Toolkit: CRWRC's Environmental Assessment Toolkit available from:  
3475 Mainway  
Box 5070 Stn LCD 1  
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8  
Phone: (905) 336-2920

#### Lutheran

Energy Conservation in LCC Churches  
[www.luthernchurch.ca/resources/energyconservation.pdf](http://www.luthernchurch.ca/resources/energyconservation.pdf)

## WORSHIP AND CHURCH EDUCATION:

#### Environment Sunday Resource Package

A fantastic DVD/CD resource package filled with sermons, worship resources, power-points, Bible studies and more to help you celebrate Environment Sunday.  
To order go to: [www.arocha.org/ukconsunday/index2.html](http://www.arocha.org/ukconsunday/index2.html)

2007 The Heat is On – Climate Change

2006 Hope for the Planet

2005 Noah's Ark, A Tale for our Times

2004 Jesus and the Earth

2003 The Bible, Creation & Celtic Christians

2002 Healing the Land

## Footprint Files

Ideas to help congregations care for creation and reduce their footprint developed by the Diocesan Environmental Commission (DEC) of the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia, with contributions from Susan Gage, Briony Penn, Cory Waters and Peggy Wilmot. Beautifully illustrated in binder format by Donald Gunn & Briony Penn of Penn and Gunn Associates. Copyright 200., ?? what year? Order from: 900 Vancouver St., Victoria, BC V8V 3V7. Tel: (250) 386-7781. E-mail: [synod@bc.anglican.ca](mailto:synod@bc.anglican.ca)

## The Great Warming Video

[www.thegreatwarming.com](http://www.thegreatwarming.com)

## Eco-congregation programme

A checklist for doing a creation care audit at your church as well as suggestions and resources for how to go further. Modules available on 11 different areas of creation care.

Download from: [www.ecocongregation.org](http://www.ecocongregation.org)

## Why Should Christians Care For Creation? – DVD

15-minute presentation by A Rocha addressing many of the questions often asked about why Christians should care for creation. Order from the A Rocha Canada head office in Surrey, B.C.

Please note that there are many resources available. This is meant to give you a place to start.

## BOOKS

### Caring for Creation

**Edited by Sarah Tillett**, Bible Reading Fellowship, 2005.

A series of essays on various theological topics with companion chapters from the experience of A Rocha projects around the world in putting belief into action.

### Caring for Creation in Your Own Backyard

**L. & M. R. Wilkinson**, Regent Vancouver, 1992

Out of print, but dynamite if you can get it from Amazon!

### Earthtrek: celebrating and sustaining God's creation Joanne

**Moyer** 2004, Herald Press, Waterloo, Ont.

Originally produced as an online study and devotion series and titled "7-Days - It is still good."

### Earthwise

**Calvin De Witt**, CRC Publications, 1994

Excellent bible study.

### For the Beauty of the Earth

**Steven Bouma-Prediger**, Baker Academic, 2002

Simply the best student textbook on the subject. Passionate, accurate and inspiring.

## Jesus and the Earth

**Bishop James Jones**, SPCK, 2003

The Bishop's eco-conversion as he re-reads the Gospels to see what Jesus said.

## Living the Good Life on God's Good Earth

**Faith Alive Books**, 2006

Excellent Bible study series on caring for creation.

## Redeeming Creation: The Biblical Basis for Environmental Stewardship

**Fred Vandyke et. al.** Intervarsity Press, 1996.

Written by four Christian biologists who bring scripture in to dialogue with current scientific findings and commitments.

## Serve God, Save the Planet: A Christian Call to Action

**J. Matthew Sleeth**, Zondervan, 2007

A must read for all who care about the planet, this unique book tells the story of Matthew Sleeth's journey to a heightened awareness of ecological issues through his work as an ER doctor and what he and his family did to reduce their impact.

## The Best Preaching on Earth: Sermons on Caring for Creation

**Stan L. Lequire, ed.** Jusdson Press, 1996

Great sermons to encourage pastors to preach creation care.

## Under the Bright Wings

**Peter Harris** pub/date?

Inspiring story of God's call and a human response that led to A Rocha's work.

## WEBSITES

### Good Seed Sunday

The A Rocha Canada endeavour to bring substantial resources to empower church communities to learn more about God's mission for creation, and our involvement in it. <http://www.goodseedsunday.com/>

### A Rocha Canada

The resources page of A Rocha Canada has many valuable documents and audio files, ranging from sermons and children programs to Bible studies. <http://www.arocha.ca/>

### Earthday Network

Under "Resources" find an interactive, kid-friendly Eco-footprint calculator as well as Environmental Fact Sheets: <http://www.earthday.net/lessonplans>

### City Farmer, Vancouver

For resources on composting <http://www.cityfarmer.org/> or Compost Hotline at (604)736-2250 or [composthotline@telus.net](mailto:composthotline@telus.net).

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## **A Rocha United Kingdom**

Activities and games for primary school students about waste and recycling, nocturnal animals, life cycles, etc.: <http://www.arocha.org/gb-en/whatwedo/national/resources/primary.html>

## **Eco-congregation project**

Many creative ideas for personal and communal sustainable living: <http://ew.ecocongregation.org/>

## **Hinterland's Who's Who**

Focused on Canadian wildlife, this site includes resources for educators, many "things to do" activities, as well as great fact sheets about and videos of many birds and animals: [http://www.hww.ca/index\\_e.asp](http://www.hww.ca/index_e.asp)

## **Dunbar Heights Baptist Church**

"The Shout of a Supernova" sermon on Psalm 19:1-6 by Pastor Barton Priebe, preached at Dunbar Heights Baptist Church, July 26, 2009 available in PDF or MP3 at [http://www.dhbc.ca/sermons/?sermon\\_id=62](http://www.dhbc.ca/sermons/?sermon_id=62).

Key points: God reveals himself visually, audibly, continually, abundantly and universally through creation.