



BLESSED EARTH

Suggestions for Honoring God's Creation

CREATION CARE THROUGHOUT THE AGES

In his parting words, Jesus tells his disciples to “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.” (*Mark 16:15*) What follows is a collection of writings on that great commissioning.

The green theologian of tomorrow joins hands with an unbroken line of believers whose faith stretches back to the Garden of Eden. May God grant us the grace to heed the wisdom of the saints who have gone before us. May He bestow upon us the courage to change. May we harken unto God's first commandment—to protect and serve the earth (*Gen 2:15*)—and in so doing may we find a peace that passes all understanding.

We pray that you find inspiration from this collection of creation care wisdom, and that you put your faith into action.

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

--*The Apostle's Creed (first century)*

Let us turn our eyes to the Father and Creator of the universe, and consider...the total absence of any friction that marks the ordering of His whole creation.

-- *St. Clement of Rome (37?-101), Letter to the Corinthians 1:19*

The initial step for a soul to come to knowledge of God is contemplation of nature.

--*Irenaeus (120-202)*

The sending of rain is an event greater than the giving of the Torah. The Torah was a joy for Israel only, but rain gives joy to the entire world, including animals and birds.

--*Midrash Psalms 117 (2nd Century)*

Nature is school-mistress, the soul the pupil; and whatever one has taught or the other has learned has come from God – the Teacher of the teacher.

--*Tertullian (160 - 230?), De Testimonio Animae*

Whoever destroys anything that could be useful to others breaks the law of Bal Tashchit - Do not Waste.

--*Babylonian Talmud, Kodashim 32a (3rd century or before)*

While the sage, Honi, was walking along a road, he saw a man planting a carob tree.

Honi asked him, "How long will it take for this tree to bear fruit?"

"Seventy years," replied the man.

Honi then asked, "Are you so healthy a man that you expect to live that length of time and eat its fruit?"

The man answered, "I found a fruitful world because my ancestors planted it for me. Likewise I am planting for my children."

--*Babylonian Talmud, Taanit 23a (3rd Century or before)*

By the greatness and the beauty of the creatures, proportionately the Maker of them is seen.

--*St. Athanasius (297-373), Against the Heathen 45:1-2*

I want creation to penetrate you with so much admiration that wherever you go, the least plant may bring you the clear remembrance of the CreatorOne 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. Basil the Great (329-379), Hexaemeron, Homily V, "The Germination of the Earth"*

The world has been created for everyone's use, but you few rich are trying to keep it for yourselves. For not merely the possession of the earth, but the very sky, the air, and the sea are claimed for the use of the rich few...The earth belongs to all, not just to the rich.

--*St. Ambrose of Milan (340-397), De Nabuthe 3*

[T]here is nothing that has been created without some reason, even if human nature is incapable of knowing precisely the reason for them all.

--*John Chrysostom (354?-407), Homilies on Genesis 7.14*

Even though you may think them superfluous in this world, creatures such as flies, bugs and gnats have their allotted task in the scheme of creation.

--*Genesis Rabbah 10:7 (between 3rd and 5th centuries)*

Without earth, there is no rain, and without rain, the earth cannot endure, and without either, humans cannot exist.

--*Genesis Rabbah 13:3 (between 3rd and 5th centuries)*

[E]ven if you are old, you must plant. Just as you found trees planted by others, you must plant them for your children.

--*Midrash Tanchuma, Kodashim 8 (4th to 5th centuries)*

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! 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. Augustine (354-430), De Civit. Dei, Book XVI*

We should remain within the limits imposed by our basic needs and strive with all our power not to exceed them. Once we are carried beyond these limits in our desire for the pleasures of life, there is no criterion to check our onwards movement, since no bounds can be set to that which exceeds the necessary.

--*St. Nilus of Ancyra (407-494), Ascetic Discourses, Vol I, Philokalia*

[I]f a dead man is raised to life, all men spring up in astonishment. Yet every day one that had no being is born, and no man wonders, though it is plain to all, without doubt, that it is a greater thing for that to be created which was without being than for that which had being to be restored. Because the dry rod of Aaron budded, all men were in astonishment; every day a tree is produced from the dry earth...and no man wonders....Five thousand men were filled with five loaves;...every day the grains of seed that are sown are multiplied in a fullness of ears, and no man wonders. All...wondered to see water once turned into wine. Every day the earth's moisture, being drawn into the root of the vine, is turned by the grape into wine, and no man

wonders. Full of wonder then are all the things which men never think to wonder at, because...they are by habit become dull to the consideration of them.

--Pope Gregory the Great, (540–604)

How can a person of flesh and blood follow God?...God, from the very beginning of creation, was occupied before all else with planting, as it is written, 'And first of all, the Eternal God planted a Garden in Eden.' Therefore... occupy yourselves first and foremost with planting.

--Leviticus Rabbah 25:3 (between 5th and 7th centuries)

"See my works, how fine and excellent they are! All that I created, I created for you. Reflect on this, and do not corrupt or desolate my world; for if you do, there will be no one to repair it after you."

--Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13 (between 6th and 8th centuries)

Poor innocent little creatures, if you were reasoning beings and could speak you would curse us. For we are the cause of your death, and what have you done to deserve it?

--St. Isaac the Syrian (last half of seventh century)

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

--St. John of Damascus (675-749), *Treatise*

I do not worship matter. I worship the Creator of matter who became matter for my sake, who willed to take His abode in matter, who worked out my salvation through matter....Because of this I salute all remaining matter with reverence, because God has filled it with his grace and power. Through it my salvation has come to me.

--St. John of Damascus (675-749), *On the Divine Images 1:16*

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 a separation of things from God.

--John Scottus Eriugena (810-877)

They shall take dominion (*v'yirdu*) - The Hebrew connotes both 'dominion' (derived from *radah*) and 'descent' (derived from *yarad*): when humanity is worthy, we have dominion over the animal kingdom; when we are not, we descend below the level of animals and the animals rule over us.

--Rashi (1040-1105)

Wherever I turn my eyes, around on Earth or to the heavens
I see You in the field of stars
I see You in the yield of the land
In every breath and sound, a blade of grass, a simple flower,
An echo of Your holy Name.

--Abraham ibn Ezra (1092-1167)

We shall awaken from our dullness and rise vigorously toward justice. If we fall in love with creation deeper and deeper, we will respond to its endangerment with passion.

--Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)

If you have men who will exclude any of God's creatures from the shelter of compassion and pity, you will have men who will deal likewise with their fellow men.

--Francis of Assisi (1181-1226)

All creatures of our God and King, lift up your voice and with us sing...
O brother wind, air, clouds, and rain, by which all creatures ye sustain...
O sister water, flowing clear, make music for thy Lord to hear...
Dear mother earth, who day by day unfoldest blessings on our say...
O praise ye! Allelulia!

--*Francis of Assisi (1181-1226)*

The quality of urban air compared to the air in the deserts and the forests is like thick and turbulent water compared to pure and light water. In the cities with their tall buildings and narrow roads, the pollution that comes from their residents, their waste makes their entire air reeking and thick although no-one is aware of it.

--*Maimonides, (1190-1200)*

If I spend enough time with the tiniest creature—even a caterpillar—I would never have to prepare a sermon. So full of God is every creature.”

--*Meister Eckhart (1260-1327 approx), Sermons*

Let a man fear, above all, me, his God, and so much the gentler will he become toward my creatures and animals, on whom, on account of me, their Creator, he ought to have compassion.

--*St. Birgitta (1303-1373), Revelation to Birgitta*

I saw three properties in the world: the first is that God made it. The second is that God loveth it. The third is, that God keepeth it. But what beheld I therein? Verily the Maker, the Keeper, the Lover.

-- *Julian of Norwich (1342-1423), Revelations of Divine Love*

I did not intend my creatures to make themselves servants and slaves to the world's pleasures. They owe their first love to me. Everything else they should love and possess, as I told you, not as if they owned it, but as something lent them.

--*Catherine of Siena (1347-1380), The Dialogue*

If thy heart were right, then every creature would be a mirror of life and a book of holy doctrine. There is no creature so small and abject, but it reflects the goodness of God.

--*Thomas Kempis (1380-1471), The Imitation of Christ*

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

--*Martin Luther (1483-1546)*

The creation is quite like a spacious and splendid house, provided and filled with the most exquisite and the most abundant furnishings. Everything in it tells us of God.

--*John Calvin (1509-1564), Institutes 1:14*

Let everyone regard himself as the steward of God in all things which he possesses. Then he will neither conduct himself dissolutely, nor corrupt by abuse those things which God requires to be preserved.

--*John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Genesis*

If we learn to love the earth, we will find labyrinths, gardens, fountains and precious jewels! A whole new world will open itself to us. We will discover what it means to be truly alive.

--*St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582)*

All the creatures - not the higher creatures alone, but also the lower, according to that which each of them has received in itself from God - each one raises its voice in testimony to that which God is...each one after its manner exalts God, since it has God in itself.

--*John of the Cross (1542-1591)*

We give you thanks, most gracious God, for the beauty of the earth and sky and sea; for the richness of mountains, plains, and rivers; for the songs of birds and the loveliness of flowers. We praise you for these good gifts and pray that we may safeguard them for our posterity. Grant that we may continue to grow in our grateful enjoyment of your abundant creation, to the honor and glory of your name, now and forever.

--*The Book of Common Prayer (1549)*

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.

--*William Shakespeare (1564-1616), Troilus and Cressida*

How endless is that volume that God hath written of the world! Every creature is a letter, every day a new page.

--*Joseph Hall (1574-1656)*

Open your eyes, and behold, the whole world is full of God.

-- *Jacob Boehme (1575-1624), The Way to Christ*

Thou are in small things great, not small in any.... For thou art infinite in one and all.

--*George Herbert (1593-1633), Providence*

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below....Praise God, the source of all our gifts.

--*Thomas Ken (1637-1711)*

It would go a long way to caution and direct people in their use of the world that they were better studied and known in the creation of it.

For how could man find the confidence to abuse it, while they should see the Great Creator stare them in the face, in all and every part thereof?

--*William Penn (1644-1718), Fruits of Solitude*

Chrysostom, I remember, mentions a twofold book of God: the book of the creatures, and the book of the scriptures: God having taught us first of all by his works, did it afterwards, by his Words. We will now for a while read the former of these books; 'twill help us in reading the latter. They will admirably assist one another.

--*Cotton Mather (1663-1728), The Two-fold Book of God*

There's not a plant or flower below but makes Thy glories known,
And clouds arise, and tempests blow by order from Thy throne;
While all that borrows life from Thee is ever in Thy care;
And everywhere that we can be, Thou, God art present there.

--*Isaac Watts (1674-1748), Divine and Moral Songs for Children*

All created things are living in the hand of God. The senses see only the action of the creatures, but faith sees in everything the action of God.

--*Jean Pierre de Caussade (1675 - 1751), Abandonment to Divine Providence*

All that is sweet, delightful, and amiable in this world, in the serenity of the air, the fineness of seasons, the joy of light, the melody of sounds, the beauty of colors, the fragrancy of smells, the splendor of precious stones, is nothing else but Heaven breaking through the veil of this world.

--*William Law (1686-1761, Rules for Living a Holy Life*

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul.

--*Alexander Pope (1688-1744), An Essay on Man*

I believe in my heart that faith in Jesus Christ can and will lead us beyond an exclusive concern for the well-being of other human beings to the broader concern for the well-being of the birds in our backyards, the fish in our rivers, and every living creature on the face of the earth.

--*John Wesley (1701-1791)*

When we behold the light and brightness of the sun, the golden edges of an evening cloud, or the beautiful rainbow, we behold the adumbrations of His glory and goodness, and in the blue sky, of his mildness and gentleness.

--*Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), Reflections of God's Glory*

The produce of the earth is a gift from our gracious Creator to the inhabitants, and to impoverish the earth now to support outward greatness appears to be an injury to the succeeding age.

--*John Woolman (1720-1772)*

Men will become poor because they will not have a love for trees....If you don't love trees, you don't love God.

--*St. Nikephoros of Chios (1750-1821), A Lack of Trees Brings Poverty*

All abuse and waste of God's creatures are spoil and robbery on the property of the Creator.

--*Adam Clarke (1762-1832)*

The world is too much with us;

Late and soon,

Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:

Little we see in Nature that is ours.

--*William Wordsworth (1770 - 1850), The World Is Too Much With Us*

Master of the Universe,

Grant me the ability to be alone;

May it be my custom to go outdoors each day
among the trees and grass - among all growing things -
and there may I be alone, and enter into prayer,
to talk with the one to whom I belong.

--*Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav (1772-1810)*

Beauty is but the sensible image of the infinite. Like truth and justice, it lives within us; like virtue and the moral law, it is a companion of the soul.

--*George Bancroft (1800-1891)*

Here on Earth too God lives, not in heaven alone. A striking fir, a rich furrow, in them you will find God's likeness...Wherever the breath of life flows, you will find God embodied.

--Saul Tchernikovsky (19th Century)

All that I have ever seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all that I have not seen.

-- Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 - 1882)

Earth is crammed with Heaven.
And every bush aflame with God.
But only those who see take off their shoes.

--Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861)

And nature, the old nurse, took
The child upon her knee,
Saying, "Here is a story book
My Father hath writ for thee.
Come, wander with me," she said,
"In regions yet untrod,
And read what is still unread
in the manuscripts of God."

--Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807 - 1882), *The Fiftieth Birthday of Agassiz*

The beauty of the world is Christ's tender smile for us coming through matter.

--Simone Weil (1909-1943)

Flowers may beckon toward us, but they speak toward heaven and God.

--Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887), *Proverbs from Plymouth Pupil*

Blessed are they who never read a newspaper, for they shall see nature, and through her, God.

--Henry David Thoreau (1817- 1862), *Journal*

Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads.

--Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)

There are crowds who trample a flower into the dust without thinking once that they have one of the sweetest thoughts of God under their heel.

--J. G. Holland (1819-1881), *Gold-Foil: Hammered from Popular Proverbs*

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.

--Fyodor Doestoyevski (1821-1881), *The Brothers Karamazov*

If it were not for the outside world, we should have no inside world to understand things by. Least of all could we understand God without these millions of sights and sounds and scents and motions weaving their endless harmonies. They come out of His heart to let us know a little of what is in it.

--George MacDonald (1824-1905), *The Highlander's Last Song*

Ten thousand leaves on every tree, and each a miracle to me; and yet there be “men” who question God!

--*Joaquin Miller (1837-1913)*

I wish you could come here and rest a year in the simple unmingled love-fountains of God. You would return with fresh truth gathered and absorbed from pines and waterfalls and deep-singing winds, and you would find that they all sang of fountain love just as did Jesus Christ.

--*John Muir (1838-1914), My First summer in the Sierras*

When a group of people are sailing in a boat, none of them has a right to bore a hole under his own seat.

--*Israel Meir ha-Kohen (1838-1933)*

Give me fellowship with the beast and bird. Let me enter into sympathy with their hunger, their thirst, their weariness, their cold, their frequent homelessness. Let me give their wants a place in my prayers.... Let me be to them what Thou hast been to me – a protector, a Providence.

--*George Matheson (1842-1906)*

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;

It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil

Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;

And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil

Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;

And though the last lights off the black West went

Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs –

Because the Holy Ghost over the bent

World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

-- *Gerard Manly Hopkins (1844 - 1889), God's Grandeur*

This is my Father's world: He shines in all that's fair;

In the rustling grass I hear Him pass, He speaks to me everywhere.

--*Maltbie D. Babcock (1858-1901), This Is My Father's World*

Man has been endowed with reason, with the power to create, so that he can add to what's been given. But up to now he hasn't been a creator, only a destroyer. Forests keep disappearing, rivers dry up, wild life's become extinct, the climates ruined and the land grows poorer and uglier every day.

--*Anton Chekhov (1860-1904), Uncle Vanya*

When I was young, I said to God, “God, tell me the mystery of the universe. But God answered, “That knowledge is for me alone.” So I said, God, tell me the mystery of the peanut. Then God said, “Well, George, that's more nearly your size.”

--*George Washington Carver (early 1860's-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.

--*George Washington Carver (early 1860's-1943)*

I love to think of nature as an unlimited broadcasting station through which God speaks to us every hour, if we will only tune in.

--George Washington Carver (early 1860's-1943)

“Jesus set before me the book of nature. I understood how all the flowers He has created are beautiful, how the splendor of the rose and whiteness of the lily do not take away the perfume of the little violet or the delightful simplicity of the daisy.”

--St. Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897), *The Flowers in the Book of Nature*

With enraptured gaze we beheld the white moon rising quietly behind the tall trees, the silvery rays it was casting upon sleeping nature, the bright stars twinkling in the deep skies, the light breath of the evening breeze making the snowy clouds float easily along; all this raised our souls to heaven.

--St. Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897)

In the created world around us we see the Eternal Artist, Eternal Love at work.

--Evelyn Underwood (1875-1941)

[T]he harvested fields bathed in the autumn mists speak of God and his goodness far more vividly than any human lips.

--Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), *Reverence for Life*

Everything in nature has its wonders, even darkness and silence, and I learn, whatever state I may be in, therein to be content.

--Helen Keller (1880-1964)

When you defile the pleasant streams and the wild bird's abiding place, you massacre a million dreams and cast your spittle in God's face.

--John Drinkwater (1882-1937)

I am I plus my surroundings, and if I do not preserve the latter, I do not preserve myself.

--Jose Ortega Y. Gasset (1883-1955), *Meditations on Quixote*

A wrong attitude toward nature implies, somewhere, a wrong attitude toward God.

--T.S. Elliot (1888-1965), *The Idea of a Christian Society*

A society in which consumption has to be artificially stimulated in order to keep production going is a society founded on trash and waste, and such a society is a house built upon sand.

--Dorothy Sayers (1893-1957)

“It can thus rightly be asked if, in spite of all his conquests, man is not turning back against himself the results of his activity. Having rationally endeavored to control nature, is he not now becoming the slave of the objects he makes?”

--Pope Paul VI (1897-1978)

What we call Man's power over Nature turns out to be a power exercised by some men over other men with Nature as an instrument.

--C.S. Lewis (1898-1963)

Because God created the natural—invented it out of His love and artistry—it demands our reverence.

--C.S. Lewis (1898-1963), *God in the Dock*

Nature never taught me that there exists a God of glory and infinite majesty. I had to learn that in other ways. But nature gave the word *glory* a meaning for me. I still do not know where else I could have found one.”

--C.S. Lewis (1898-1963)

Time and space—time to be alone, space to move about—these may well become the great scarcities of tomorrow.

--Edwin Way Teale (1899-1980), *Autumn Across America*

Twilight - a time of pause when nature changes her guard. All living things would fade and die from too much light or too much dark, if twilight were not.

--Howard Thurman (1899-1981)

I would feel more optimistic about a bright future for man if he spent less time proving that he can outwit Nature and more time tasting her sweetness and respecting her seniority.

--E.B. White (1899-1985), *Essays of E. B. White*

I see skies of blue and clouds of white
The bright blessed day, the dark sacred night
And I think to myself, what a wonderful world.

--Louis Armstrong (1901-1970), *What a Wonderful World*

God is not identified with the world, for he made it; but God is not separated from His world, either. For he made it.

--Joseph Sittler (1904-1987)

After all, I don't see why I am always asking for private, individual, selfish miracles when every year there are miracles like white dogwood.

--Anne Morrow Lindbergh (1906-2001)

We need to find God, but we cannot find him in noise or in excitement. See how nature, the trees, the flowers, the grass grow in deep silence. See how the stars, the moon, and the sun all move in silence.

--Mother Teresa (1910-1997)

[W]e are to exercise our dominion over these things, not as though entitled to exploit them, but as things borrowed or held in trust....Man's dominion is under God's Dominion, and in God's Domain.

--Francis A. Schaeffer (1912-1984), *Pollution and the Death of Man*

If I am going to be in the right relationship with God, I should treat the things he has made in the same way he treats them.

--Francis Schaeffer (1912-1984), *Pollution and the Death of Man*

One has to be alone, under the sky, before everything falls into place and one finds his own place in the midst of it all.

--Thomas Merton (1915 - 1968), *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*

What a thing it is to sit absolutely alone, in the forest, at night, cherished by this wonderful, unintelligible, perfectly innocent speech, the most comforting speech in the world, the talk that rain makes by itself all over the ridges, and the talk of the watercourses everywhere in the hollows.

Nobody started it, nobody is going to stop it. It will talk as long as it wants, this rain. As long as it talks, I am going to listen.

--Thomas Merton (1915-1968), *Raids on the Unspeakable, Abbey of Gethsemani*

The growing possibility of our destroying ourselves and the world with our own neglect and excess is tragic and very real.

--Billy Graham (1918-), *Approaching Hoofbeats*

To drive to extinction something He has created is wrong. He has a purpose for everything.... We Christians have a responsibility to take the lead in caring for the earth.

--Billy Graham (1918-), *Detroit Free Press*

When man turns his back on the Creator's plan, he provokes a disorder which has inevitable repercussions on the rest of the created order. If man is not at peace with God, then earth itself cannot be at peace.

--Pope John Paul II (1920-2005), *Peace with God, Peace with Creation*

The seriousness of ecological degradation lays bare the depth of man's moral crisis....Simplicity, moderation and discipline, as well as the spirit of sacrifice, must become a part of everyday life.

--Pope John Paul II (1920-2005), *Peace with God, Peace with Creations*

Around the world, we can see the results of exploitation which destroys much without taking future generations into account. Today, all men have a duty to show themselves worthy of the mission given them by the Creator by ensuring the safekeeping of that creation.

--Pope John Paul II (1920-2005), *Press conference, Antannanarivo, The Malagasy Republic*

Christians will want to be in the vanguard in favoring ways of life that decisively break with the exhausting and joyless frenzy of consumerism.

--Pope John Paul II (1920-2005), *Speech at Yankee Stadium*

Did God make the world? Does he sustain it? Has he committed its resources to our care? His personal concern for his own creation should be sufficient to inspire us to be equally concerned.

--John R.W. Stott (1921-), *from the Introduction to Under the Bright Wings*

[T]he maternal sea is polluted, the heavens are rent, the forests are being destroyed and the desert areas are increasing. We must protect creation. Better yet, we must embellish it, render it spiritual, transfigure it. But nothing will be done unless there is a general conversion of men's minds and hearts.

--Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch (1921-), *A Theology of Creation*

If nature is not transfigured, she becomes disfigured.

--Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch (1921-), *The Responsibility of Christians*

Once we repossess a sense of our own holiness, we will recover the sense of the holiness of the world....Only in this way will we once again become aware that our destiny and the destiny of nature are one and the same.

--Philip Sherrard (1922-1995), *Human Image, World Image*

The chariot of human development has gained momentum but seems to be running amok without a charioteer. We know that consumerism is bad, but what can we do except go on consuming more and more? We know that the gap between the rich and the poor is widening, but what can we do except live with our guilt and lend an occasional hand to the poor?

--Paulos Mar Gregorios (1924-1997), *The Human Presence: Ecological Spirituality in the Age of the Spirit*

Through His spirits God himself is present in His creation. The whole creation is a fabric woven and shot through by the efficacies of the Spirit.

--Juergen Moltmann (1926-)

The family needs a home, a fit environment in which to develop its proper relationships. For the human family, this home is the earth, the environment that God the Creator has given us to inhabit with creativity and responsibility. We need to care for the environment: it has been entrusted to men and women to be protected and cultivated with responsible freedom, with the good of all as a constant guiding criterion.

--Pope Benedict XVI, 2007 *World Day of Peace message*

The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quiet, alone with the heavens, nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be and that God wishes to see people happy, amidst the simple beauty of nature....I firmly believe that nature brings solace in all troubles.

--Anne Frank (1929-1945), *Diary*

We must work passionately and indefatigably to bridge the gulf between our scientific progress and our moral progress. One of the great problems of mankind is that we suffer from a poverty of the spirit which stands in glaring contrast to our scientific and technological abundance. The richer we have become materially, the poorer we have become morally and spiritually.

--Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968)

The first law of our being is that we are set in a delicate network of interdependence with our fellow human beings and with the rest of God's creation.

--Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1931-), *God Has A Dream*

The same God who commanded us to love one another also commands us to work and take care of the garden. Here, humans find that God has delegated to them authority and responsibility to protect and preserve what we do not own, what belongs to God. God did not abdicate ownership. Rather, God appointed a steward, a caretaker. Justice demands that the steward faithfully execute the assigned responsibility.

--Bishop George D. McKinney, Jr. (1931-)

Our predicament now, I believe, requires us to learn to read and understand the Bible in the light of the present fact of Creation.

--Wendell Berry (1934-) *Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community*

The Bible makes clear a basic truth that we self-centered humans find difficult to accept, namely, that the natural universe was not created primarily for us. There is no doubt that God wants us to enjoy it and even use its resources to optimize a good life for ourselves. But the ultimate purpose of creation is worship. Nature and all living things were created to glorify God.

--Tony Campolo, (1935-), *Carpe Diem*

Right after Moses had delivered the Ten Commandments, he received instructions to build an altar of unhewn stone "for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it."I don't think such a scripture means we are never to shape the earth with our art or science, but that the scientist and the artist must remain subordinate to the larger Creation. The chances of disrupting nature's patterns, upon which we are dependent, are greatly reduced if we assume this modest posture.

--Wes Jackson (1936-), *Altars of Unhewn Stone*

How we treat the earth and all of creation defines the relationship that each of us has with God....

To commit a crime against the natural world is a sin. For humans to cause species to become extinct and to destroy the biological diversity of God's creation...for humans to degrade the integrity of Earth by causing changes in its climate, by stripping the Earth of its natural forests, or destroying its wetlands...for humans to injure others humans with disease...for humans to contaminate the Earth's waters, its land, its air, and its life, with poisonous substances, these things are sins.

-- Patriarch Bartholomew (1940 -), *Remarks at the Symposium on Religion, Science and the Environment, Santa Barbara, California*

In a time of ecological emergency, the church can offer to the world a hope that is rooted in the power of God to bring new life into all that has been created.

--Wesley Granberg-Michaelson (1945-), *Ecology and Life*

Living a green life is within the reach of every one of us. I think you can. God thinks you can. When the children from the next valley see us and the world we pass on to them...my hope is that they'll see a little generation that did.

--Emma Sleeth (1990-), *It's Easy Being Green*



OUR MISSION

Blessed Earth is an educational nonprofit that inspires and equips faith communities to become better stewards of the earth. Through outreach to churches, campuses and media we build bridges that promote measurable environmental change and meaningful spiritual growth.

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