

CREATION CARE



A PROJECT OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION
OF THE BAPTIST GENERAL CONVENTION OF TEXAS

“God writes the Gospel, not in the Bible alone, but also on the trees, and in the flowers and clouds and stars.”¹

Martin Luther

“Let all regard themselves as the stewards of God in all things which they possess. Then they will neither conduct themselves dissolutely, nor corrupt by abuse those things which God requires to be preserved.”²

John Calvin

“In the biblical creation stories we catch a glimpse of the good world that God intended. Under their influence we begin to notice, by contrast, ways in which our lifestyles are sinful and our physical world is distressed.”³

Robert Kruschwitz

“Viewed through the lens of Scripture, the environmental crisis is best understood as creation-in-crises, which elevates the significance of our situation to the very heart of God. We are called to have dominion over the earth; this does not mean to exploit, but to exercise care and responsibility for God’s domain particularly in the interest of those who are poor and marginalized.”⁴

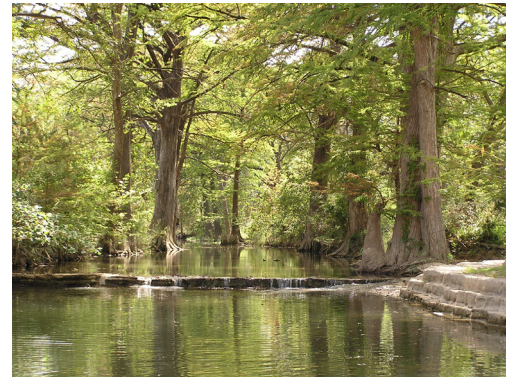
Russell A. Butkus

Caring for Creation

A Christian Responsibility

Although we may not often discuss it—or in some cases we may not even be aware of it—the Bible is clear: we are to care for God’s Creation.

All of Creation—human and non-human—has been entrusted to us by God. We are called to care for and protect it. Just as our bodies are a temple, God has so ordered the Creation that what we do to one part harms the whole. All of Creation is singing, a relentless symphony of praise to God. Let us work to not silence it. And as with our bodies, the results of our poor care may not be apparent today but will be clear in the future. Additionally, when we harm God’s earth, we harm God’s people. It is “the least of these” that carry the greatest burden when we neglect God’s call for us to care for Creation.



Creation is God’s artistry

The Creation is God’s artwork. It is good, quality, highly detailed artwork. It reveals God’s character and qualities. God values it all—every detail, every brush stroke, every human, every creature, every speck of it. And it all depends on God’s continuing care.

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

“For since the creation of the world, God’s invisible qualities—God’s eternal power and divine nature—has been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that humans are without excuse.” *Romans 1:20* [See also *Psalm 19*.]

“Are not two sparrows sold for one penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of God.” *Matthew 10:29*

“[Christ] is before all things, and in Christ all things hold together.” *Colossians 1:17*

“The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it.” *Psalm 24:1*

(Over)

Sin's destruction and God's redemption

The biblical creation stories teach us that God is the creator and sustainer of all that exists. It is through our human sinfulness that we harm Creation and through Christ that all of Creation is redeemed.

“The creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice....The whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.” *Romans 8:19-22*

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“God was pleased to have all God's fullness dwell in [Christ] and through him to reconcile to God all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” *Colossians 1:19-20*

Earthkeeping: Our responsibility

God has charged us with caring for Creation.

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till and keep it.” *Genesis 2:15*

Depending on the translation, we might find the word “dominion” in place of “to till and keep.” In this verse, the Hebrew words *shamar* and *abad* are used and are usually translated as to “till and keep.” They could be just as accurately translated as to “serve and preserve.”

In Numbers 6:24, **“The Lord bless you and keep you,”** the word *shamar* is also used and it is translated as “keep.” God desires that we keep and care for Creation in the same way that God keeps and cares for us.

We are called to be stewards of God's earth. We are ruling over *God's* creation, it is not ours.

“You [God] made humans ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under our feet: All flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.” *Psalms 8:6-8*

We are to be servant leaders, following Christ's example. Jesus **“did not come to be served, but to serve, to give his life as a ransom for many.” *Matthew 20:28***



To get involved in the Creation Care Project, contact:

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Resources

Serve God, Save the Planet: A Christian Call to Action by J. Matthew Sleeth, MD

Christian Reflection: Moral Landscape of Creation

Published by the Center for Christian Ethics at Baylor University, 2001

Remember Creation by Scott Hoezee

Redeeming Creation: The Biblical Basis for Environmental Stewardship by Fred Van Dyke, et al.

Restoring Eden / www.restoringeden.org

Evangelical Environmental Network / www.creationcare.org

Texas Impact / www.texasimpact.org

References

• Scripture verses taken from NIV, KJV, RSV, NASB translations.

¹ Martin Luther, *Luther Works* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1961).

² John Calvin, 1554, *Commentary on Genesis*, (from the English translation of 1847).

³ *Christian Reflection: Moral Landscape of Creation*, page 6, published by the Center for Christian Ethics at Baylor University, 2001.

⁴ *Christian Reflection: Moral Landscape of Creation*, page 17, published by the Center for Christian Ethics at Baylor University, 2001.