

CONTENTS

Comment	2
Caring for Creation As Worship of the Creator	3
A Christian Approach to Climate Change	6
Canticle of the Creatures	9
Creation and Contemplation	11
Domination or Delight?	14
Watching the Moon Rise	18
A Spirituality of Home-Making in a Property-Dealing World	21
Where Sustainable and Contemplative Lifestyles Can Meet	25
Climate Change and Christian Faith	26
Climate Change and Asia's Rivers	28
Give Us Some Of Your Oil	32
In What Ways Does The Natural World Deepen My Awareness Of The Spirit?	35
Beyond	37
Me, The Tree, And God	38
Ecological Footprints and Sustainability	39
Hogave Conservation Project in Papua New Guinea Highlands	43
Cemetery Washed Away By Rising Sea	45
Christian Ecospirituality	46
Spiritual Values For Earth Living Today	47
The Journey	48
Humour	48
A Rocha	49
Painint The Sky	51
Book Reviews	52
Film Reviews	55
SGM News	56
Resources	58
Contributors	60

COMMENTS

Andrew Dunn

*The glory of God – let it last forever!
Let God enjoy his creation!*

Psalm 104:31 The Message

The writers of Psalm 104 see creation as God's glory, God's handiwork, reflecting the wonder of the Creator. Today we are in a phase of life and thought when, right around the world, there is a growing consensus that God's good earth is in trouble and that human activity plays a major part in this. John Seymour's comment hits the point: "An insult to the Creation is an insult to the Creator".

As contemplative Christians we can see that this is not simply a physical matter with implications for economics, agriculture, business and the health of the planet. It has a bearing on things of the spirit as well – aesthetics, spirituality, earth as our only home, God's enjoyment and our enjoyment of God's amazing gift of home to us.

It is also becoming clear that Christian living, mission and ministry which only focus on salvation of people is falling far short of the mark of a balanced faith. Salvation is as much about this earth and universe as it is about individual people. Biblically, it is a serious imbalance in message and goals to ignore the context in which people live and our effect upon our world and its systems. Slowly, slowly this out-of-kilteredness is being recognized and challenged.

In this issue of Refresh we offer a wide variety of articles, art, verse and snippets to stimulate thinking and further

PAGE 2

exploration of earth and spirit and their deep connections. With ecology, the environment and issues of climate change appearing now not only as scientific studies and political agendas but also in theology, spiritual growth and prayer, there is a wonderful expansion of our ways of being on earth, of seeing our only home with fresh eyes and finding both a mission in its care and in reshaping our use, misuse and overuse of its life forms and delicate balances.

There are many people who still don't accept that there is a problem. However, the scientific models set up a decade ago regarding carbon emissions and climate change have proven to be so accurate in their predictions that they can't be ignored. Even clearer is the impact of climate change on rainfall in Australia and the desertification of vast tracts of arable land there and in Africa and other places – even on New Zealand's eastern coasts! World wide, glaciers show immediate and obvious signs of serious of temperature change, and, as the recent film *Earth* shows, many of them are changing rapidly. Low-lying atolls and coastal villages in many parts of the world are now being inundated by sea level rise and by more violent and frequent storms due to climate change. Frogs, some insects and many coral reefs are being affected. And so it goes on.

Frank Borman was captain of the first manned space module to circle the moon. In a recent recall of that event he described how their craft, flying away from earth with no view of it, flew in darkness around behind the moon before swinging out into sunlight again, and there, away over the

arid moon horizon was a pristine view of a blue and white earth. It stunned him and his two companions. In their Christmas Eve message home that evening they sent the photos of earth and moon and he read from Genesis 1, concluding with "... and behold it was very good". Mission controllers and many in the worldwide audience wept at the power of it all.

How can we catch a fresh glimpse of the uniqueness of this world, of life on it, of the wonder of Christ as the one by whom it was created and now holds it all in being, as St Paul puts it so enticingly (Coloss. 1:15-17)? There are both rich spiritual realities and nourishment here as well as an open invitation to engage with many practical issues that bear directly on the earth and its health and future. Ministering to it is ministering to him!

One issue which has been exercising me is the matter of ecological footprints, how much of the earth's area, our own country's area, it takes to service each person's needs and lifestyle. Related to that is what we demand for our lifestyle and what that demand means for others who don't or can't have our "quality of life". I was gob-smacked the first time I heard that to reproduce our New Zealand lifestyle for everyone in the world it would take three earths to produce and sustain it! Here is something immediate and practical we can do something about. The good news for all demands that of us.

"For the Church of the 21st Century, good ecology is not an optional extra but a matter of justice. It is therefore central to what it means to be a Christian". (Archbishop Rowan Williams. 2005)

Earth and Spirit! We trust there will be much here to stimulate and expand your understanding and doing.

CARING FOR CREATION AS WORSHIP OF THE CREATOR

Peter Harris

For many Christians who care about the world, the current environmental crisis seems not only to be out of reach, but more properly left to others of a more political turn of mind. Christian caring has traditionally focussed exclusively on human need in all its many and disparate forms, but its environmental causes or context rarely seem to figure in the picture. However, we are living in remarkable times as the church world wide is recovering its ecological conscience, and many opportunities to rediscover ways of making known Jesus as Lord by caring for his creation are opening up around this needy world. So it is long overdue for us to look again at some of the reasons for what has proved in the past to be a tragic Christian indifference, but is now becoming a new frontier of Christian mission. We need to recognise that it is Christian leaders in the poorer world who are prompting us to see how the devastation of the environment is impacting church and society, and who are asking some of the following questions:

How does this new area of work relate to the church's fundamental identity as worshippers of Christ the Lord, and witnesses to his gospel? If what surrounds us is God's handiwork, rather than being merely "ecosystem services" or natural resources, as some secular groups would have it, isn't that some indication that we should look after it? We now recognise that environmental causes more than any other are contributing to human suffering. They have led to more people becoming refugees in the last decade

PAGE 3

than warfare, and lie behind over half the world's disease. So isn't that sufficient reason for us to reconsider if we need to get involved?

What is the biblical basis for such a concern for creation?

Is creation care biblical?

We need to begin with the last question because the way the Bible would frame the question of whether we should care for creation, or about any other Christian caring for that matter, is to ask us who Jesus is, and what it means for us to follow him as Lord. From the beginning of Genesis to the final promises of Revelation the biblical story is of God's love reaching out to his whole creation, and supremely to people within it. Nothing else can explain the promise of the first covenant in Genesis 9:17:

"This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on earth.", or the ringing hope of Romans 8: 19-21, "The creation itself was subjected to futility.. in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its slavery to corruption

into the glorious freedom of the children of God". The Bible understands that those who follow Jesus as Lord are led straight into relationship with him, and then into the restoration of all their relationships, personal, social and with the wider

creation itself. We never find the biblical call to mission beginning with people, and simply trying to work out from there what are the most pressing needs they face. This agenda owes more to the humanism of the renaissance and the enlightenment than a robust Christian world view.

So a truly biblical view of our calling begins with the questions, "Who is Jesus, how do we worship him rightly, and how can we make him known in the world?"

The log-jam in evangelical thinking that has so sadly opposed social action to evangelistic endeavour, rather than understanding both as a consequence of the knowledge that Jesus is Lord, is only one of the consequences of this false point of departure. For people like ourselves, raised in a post-enlightenment culture that puts people and not God at the heart of our thinking, such a reordering doesn't always come naturally but we cannot but admit that it is more biblical.

Integrating the task: creation work and worship of the Creator

While it is very encouraging that Christians all over the world are now agreed about the urgency of this task, and the biblical calling to make it second nature in our discipleship, we need to be clear about its nature if we are not to become overwhelmed and exhausted. The global challenges are immense, and there is much we need to learn fast if we are to meet them wisely but immediately.

The first thing for Christians to realise is that they are participating in God's own work, as in all mission callings. He is at work in his world, and by the power of his Spirit, we have the

privilege of participating in that activity. His care for his own creation is infinitely greater than our own, and it is only hope in his redemptive plans for it that can keep us going. So Christians are not simply people who adopt technical fixes and then pray, but people who draw on the character of God for wisdom, and relationship with

him for all the fruits of the Spirit we need to work well, both together, and in partnership with all others who share our aims.

Christian creation care cannot be eco-pharisaism, the adoption of a new ethical code to bolt on to others which we use to guide our decisions. Rather, we care for God's creation because he does, and because in our very identity we are called to do so. As we do so, we will more truly proclaim the character of our Lord, but that isn't our fundamental motivation. Neither is the likelihood of failure or success in the projects we undertake. We will work for what we know pleases the living God, whether or not we believe we will always succeed.

Does creation care matter?

It is unlikely at best, and incoherent at worst, to imagine that God is indifferent to the widespread destruction of what he has created. To think that we can claim on the one hand to love God, and then to be indifferent to his creation, or even worse to live destructively, is even more tragic. As has been well said, "It is impossible to say you love Rembrandt while you trash his paintings." Set the wonderful promise of God's redemption of creation against some of the current statistics which demonstrate that, for example, world-wide we risk losing fifty per cent of the meagre four per cent of plants we have already managed to describe in the wonderful treasure house of bio-diversity which is literally of God's making.

Some groups such as birds are less dramatically at risk - only twelve per cent will be lost in the next fifty years it seems - but then there are only just over nine thousand species to start with. What we are witnessing is casual, widespread,

catastrophic destruction even while our awareness of the causes becomes ever more clear. We are in fact seeing the consequences of religious choices as human society on the western consumer model opts for personal comfort at the cost of the survival of the wider creation.

What does a distinctively Christian response look like?

So much for the beginnings of a theology for creation care, but how can it work out in practice? How does the wonderful prospect of hope for creation take shape in particular places in our own times? For the last twenty five years, A Rocha has been working to show how a distinctively Christian response can bring protection to endangered areas and species, and new hope to embattled human communities.

Behind it all is a Christian witness that recognises the relevance of the gospel to everything God has made. Now working in eighteen countries including Portugal, Lebanon, Kenya, Canada and the Czech Republic, teams are conducting scientific research, educational programs, and through living communities often based in field study centres, they are living out in practice what the gospel means to all comers. From the Alvor marshes of Portugal, to the Arabuko-Sokoke forest of the Kenya coast, or the Bekaa Valley marshes of Lebanon, and even on the post-industrial waste ground of the Minet site in London, UK, where an A Rocha team has led the creation of a country park, there are grounds for hope.

Plans are being laid throughout New Zealand for community-based projects that could make a difference to endangered habitats and species, and bring renewal to human communities as well.

In many countries habitats that are facing severe threats may now continue to show something of the wonder of God's care in creating remarkable and beautiful biodiversity, and the communities around them have the chance to know more of their Creator and Redeemer.

A CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Nicola Hoggard Creegan

I want to look at a few reasons why Christians should be making care of creation and response to climate change a religious priority. The mandate for care comes directly out of a Christian understanding of God's being, as three in one, as dwelling with us, and yet being beyond the world. For Christians, especially, the natural world in all its smallness and grandeur is the locus of God's presence and activity; this is how God is known as Creator, Spirit and as logos.

I would argue that as Christians we believe that God's Spirit imbues and permeates creation, is in fact its animating drive and creative presence. The creation is the temple of God.¹ Christ is not only the one in whom God dwells but is also the incarnation of the logos, the ordering principal of creation, "in whom all things hang together." (Col 1:18) As one who has a long-standing interest in mathematics, I see natural connections with logos in the

1 Greg Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, (Intervarsity Press, 2004)

glimpses of deep order and beauty that are visible in the mathematical structure of the created world at every level of its being; these are indications perhaps of the lines of rupture, in the fabric of reality.

Awe and wonder

God's presence is the reason for awe and wonder, the beginning of all religious consciousness. Without this deep connection to the natural world all religious longing would disappear. Awe seems to have characterised humanity from its beginning - represented in cave art and in the burial of dead - and is perhaps present also in a shadow form in the emotional life of animals, especially the more sentient creatures.

"Without this deep connection to the natural world all religious longing would disappear."

If we consider God's presence as going before the world, as being beyond the world, but also within and for the world, we cannot but dwell on the long, long history of God's relationship with the natural world which preceded humanity.

God must have loved the natural world, and the creatures of the world long before humanity arrived. The natural world in all its forms of life responded to the Spirit of God in mysterious ways which may have shaped and undergirded the fully sentient human religious response and human sense of awe. The philosopher Bruce Foltz has spoken eloquently of this mysterious life of its own which all peoples once recognised in nature, and which our industrial age has largely eclipsed. He says:

The idea of a universe that is self-subsistent—standing entirely on its own, fully operational and intelligible, independent of anything outside

itself—is both odd and modern. In the course of human experience it is an extraordinary concept, defying the shared wisdom of virtually all peoples, almost everywhere outside of Western Europe and its sphere of influence... Nature as a whole becomes an externality, with nothing behind it and nothing within it.

He goes on to argue that in the psalms we get the epitome of a description of nature as "being turned radically and ecstatically toward a distance unto which all the resonance of that life is directed, and from which that life is itself derived".²

We must care about the fate of the created order, then, because it is in nature that we know God, and because nature is loved in turn by God. The affliction of the world due to humanly induced climate change is therefore of concern to Christians.

Moreover, the Scriptures tell us what we might not be able to discern from nature alone, that we have a place of privilege and of responsibility with respect to the natural world. Here I am speaking of the mandate

to dominion and to care for the natural world which is declared in Genesis 1 & 2. It is our responsibility to partner with the caring and immanent God in the care of the creatures and of all life on this planet.

The prophets

The care of creation is linked, however, to other moral concerns. The prophets

2 Bruce V. Foltz, "Nature's Other Side: The Demise of Nature and the Phenomenology of Givenness", *Rethinking Nature*, ed. Bruce Foltz & Robert Frodean (Indiana University Press, 2004)

consistently drew links between injustice and the plight of the land in passages that speak eloquently today of the connection between the way we live and health of the created order:

Isaiah, for instance, says:

The earth dries up and withers
The world languishes and withers
The heavens languish together with the earth
The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants
For they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes
Broken the everlasting covenant
The wine dries up, the vat languishes
(Isa 24:4-5, 7, 11)

And Ezekiel similarly declares:

Say to the people of the land: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says about those living in Jerusalem and in the land of Israel: They will eat their food in anxiety and drink their water in despair, for their land will be stripped of everything in it because of the violence of all who live there.' (Ez 12:19)

These words should caution us to see the solution to our problems holistically; obeying the "grammars" of the gospel and doing justice as the prophets described, are connected to doing good for the land. Humans cannot be green and live unjustly with our neighbours. In the twenty-first century we now glimpse what was well known to many pre-industrial peoples, that living well in all areas of life, respecting life in all its diversities and forms are connected modalities. The healing of the earth cannot be done in a way which is isolated from other areas of moral concern.

The Gospels

It is not just what we know about creation or about our evolutionary history that leads us to this view of God. The incarnation gives us a picture of a God who is deeply connected to the material world, and has poured out God's very being in order to heal and redeem the world. Two themes from the gospels, in particular, illustrate this incessant love and attention of God for the natural things of the world.

The first relates to the "lost" passages in Luke - the lost coin, the lost sheep and the lost son (Luke 15). These passages depict a God of almost obsessive concern for God's loved ones. This is not a God who sits afar off and watches as humans make a great mess of things. If we combine this picture of God as the woman searching for the lost coin with the image of the God who knows when the sparrow falls (Matt 10:29) we see a God who is in this intimate and purposeful relationship with all that is made.

God's presence, then, is a part of the solution. True, the evil we face in climate change is human responsibility and what might be called sin. Humans have failed to be in a relationship of care to the earth, have failed sometimes to believe we are a part of nature. This does not mean that we can cure the earth by ourselves. Christians live in a paradoxical relationship with God. A secular or even "spiritual" view might see nature as the ultimate reality and humans as the cause and the solution to all earth's problems. For Christians, the situation is more complex. Humans do have responsibilities to represent God, but a part of the religious response will always be the seeking of God's healing, waiting on God.

The second gospel insight then, is that the religious proper response is not only

to try to fix things, which we must do, but to repent and to ask for healing—to welcome in the healing response that God is always offering to the perplexing mix of sin and brokenness that is the human and the creaturely experience. The gospels show us that when people asked for healing, as in the case of Jairus in Matt 5: 22, Jesus responded in a way that exceeded all expectations or possibilities. Healing is available not only for human sickness but for all sickness and affliction. The religious response is to cooperate with all human attempts to heal the earth - because God loves creation and was in intimate connection with nature long before humans arrived - but also to practise prayer for healing for the earth.

Conclusion

The conviction that God is in purposeful and intimate relationship with nature, that this evokes in us a sense of awe and wonder, and that humans have been placed in a position of responsibility and care over the creation are reasons for hope. Hope is a part of the religious response to crisis and is our gift, God's gift to the world. Christians have a unique part to play in response to climate change - challenging the emptiness and mechanical nature of a secular view of nature, challenging the implicit Deism of many scientific outlooks, and in keeping alive the image of a God who is always near, and always longing for human and creaturely relationship. This hope, this wonder, this sense of giftedness and of human longing for shalom on earth are properly expressed in action, but also in prayer and in liturgy and in song.

CANTICLE OF THE CREATURES

St. Francis of Assisi

Most high, all-powerful, all good, Lord!
All praise is yours, all glory, all honour
And all blessing.

To you, alone, Most High, do they belong.
No mortal lips are worthy
To pronounce your name.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through all that you have made,
And first my Lord Brother Sun,
Who brings the day; and light you give to us through him.
How beautiful is he, how radiant in all his splendour!
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Moon and Stars;
In the heavens you have made them, bright
And precious and fair.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air,
And fair and stormy, all the weather's moods,
By which you cherish all that you have made.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Water,
So useful, lowly, precious and pure.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
Through whom you brighten up the night.
How beautiful is he, how gay! Full of power and strength.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Earth, our mother,
Who feeds us in her sovereignty and produces
Various fruits with coloured flowers and herbs.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through those who grant pardon
For love of you; through those who endure
Sickness and trial.
Happy those who endure in peace,
By you, Most High, they will be crowned.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death,
From whose embrace no mortal can escape.
Woe to those who die in mortal sin!
Happy those She finds doing your will!
The second death can do no harm to them.

Praise and bless my Lord, and give him thanks,
And serve him with great humility.



Brother Sun, Sister Moon
 Stained glass windows at the Franciscan Friary,
 Auckland, by Fr Peter Confeggi,
 now of Parramata, New South Wales.
 Photo: Andrew Dunn.

CREATION AND CONTEMPLATION

The Indivisible Duo

Andrew Dunn

Creation's endless artistry has stirred the human spirit from the beginning. God's finger craftsmanship brings a gasp of surprise and wonder in every fresh glimpse we get of it, any fresh angle on familiar things. The expansiveness of heart and mind "out there" in nature, up there in the universe, in there in the delicacy and beauty of flower or form is a universal experience for humans. The "Wow!" or "Thankyou!" is universal.

And it's not only in the believing heart that this occurs. When Richard Dawkins, the aggressive and current sceptic, was asked how he responded to creation's delights he said, "With thankfulness".

I think it's true to say that while there are many triggers to human contemplation the most universally common is in creation. There are many others of course - music, art, thought, craft and creating are but a few. However, most of us find that what lies on every hand is a major source of joy and delight, of ways of entering into the contemplative experience.

A human faculty

Contemplation is a human faculty of receptivity, wonder and delight, a sense of being met. It comes from the Latin word *contemplari*, to gaze at. For the Romans of old it described the meeting place, the *templum*, the place in the sky where the gods met them. We use it in a wider context of any activity that opens us as our five sense are engaged. "It is

primarily a way of looking and listening, of beholding, marvelling, considering" writes Margaret Magdalen in *Jesus - Man of Prayer* (Hodder 1987. P.12).

It is not an activity of the mind as in *meditatio*, meditation, which is active thought or rumination. *Contempaltio* (contemplation) has a strong sense of being addressed, "of perceiving receptively", of being met by "Someone who loves us" (Mark Gibbard - *Prayer and Contemplation*. Mowbrays 1976. P.12).

There's often a clear sense of openness to God in the present moment, well described as "the sacrament of the present moment" by de Caussade; of "humble receptiveness, this still and steady gazing" (Evelyn Underhill); "seeing with wonder, respect and humility" (Howard Zehr. *Contemplative Photography* Good Books. 2005 - subtitle).

With Mary M. Funk we find that "the present moment delights us. We see it as an opportunity for grace and mystery" (*Tools Matter for Practicing the Spiritual Life*. Continuum. 2004) because the moments of present address are holy ground. So...

"Let our hearts take off their shoes,
 and come, bare, trembling with awe,
 into the Presence which burns too bright
 and too close for ordinary vision....
 Words cannot contain the moment;
 but let's take with us
 the feeling of awe and wonder.
 Tomorrow's path might be dark,
 difficult and sharp with stones,
 but in this sacred place we feel
 we may never wear shoes again."

(Joy Cowley. *Aotearoa Psalms*.
 Catholic Supplies (NZ) Ltd. 1989. 34)

Thankfully, there has been a notable shift in thinking about contemplatives and contemplation in the last 50 years. Rather than describing only the few mystics at the top of the mountain of contemplation, it is now understood that all humans are contemplative by nature, formed that way in our mothers' wombs. Indeed it is by the faculty of contemplation that we first experience reality and engage with the world - warmth, seclusion, comfort, sound, our mother's rhythmic heartbeat and breathing.

So it is a delight to discover and embrace for ourselves Tilden

Edwards' truth that "a contemplative is not a special kind of person; every person is a special kind of contemplative" (*Living in the Presence*. 1987). And then to accept the invitation to go on and explore how that is for each of us - now that expands the heart, that builds personhood, that develops confidence as a person made in God's image, made for grace and love, for service and responsibility.

Recovering the gift

The problem for most of us is that we have lost the gift of contemplation. It gets squeezed and truncated by life and its demands, pace, pressures, education and productivity. But, as many of us have learned, it can be recovered. Find what draws you to wonder, delight, surprise and engagement and do more of that. Ask God as you know God best at the moment to rebuild the gift in you and set yourself in the way of "wonder, love and praise" as Charles Wesley put it so well.

This helps to recover the contemplative heart, to rebuild a contemplative stance

to life out of which we can live a more balanced life, more truly human and sensitive to all God has for us and is for us. As with most forms of prayer "turning up" and placing ourselves in the way of the presence becomes important. If we let busyness and the demands of life and work set our priorities we can hold God off, we can ignore the still, small voice, the insistent presence of Jesus, the warmth of the Holy Spirit.

... *"a contemplative is not a special kind of person; every person is a special kind of contemplative"*

For me the engaging is as simple as taking a walk into our bush or beside the sea at nearby beaches or sitting with a cup of coffee on a garden seat and being present there. It can be simply entering the love of

God's presence in the wakeful stillness of the night. A prayer word like "Maranatha, come Lord Jesus" is often enough to open us up to each other, especially when used regularly in meditation.

Mind you, it wasn't always like that. For decades I was an observer of creation, analysing and observing, until one day I suddenly found myself embraced with beauty in such a way that I was no longer outside looking in. I became a participant in the life and flow of it all.

This loss of control brought a whole new perspective, a sense of the holy ground of creation and the privilege of being a miniscule but aware part of it. It was mind and heart boggling - a "cosmological shift" as my spiritual director described it on a later retreat. It involves something of a surrender of mind and heart to the invitation to be a part of the immensity of creation rather than the critic or analyst or researcher from the outside.

It's a surrender to the unsafeness of being as much delicate and exposed to all the

forces of life as any other life form. Scary? Yes! Risky? Surely! Dependent on God's gift of life? Entirely! And wonderfully freeing.

Perspectives

So is it all about self indulgence, a personalised spirituality, using creation for our own ends? No, definitely not.

The shift from observing to participation brings with it important shifts in attitudes as well. Contemplation brings perspective - a place to stand to see the long view, and the near view as well. It offers a place to sense presence and to get absence into perspective as well.

There can be a dawning realisation of the unity of all things, and of our kinship with everything in creation. Indeed, "We are the earth reflecting on itself. We are the earth become conscious. And it changes everything" (Miriam Therese MacGillis).

This shift can bring a sense of humility in place of past cockiness and domination.

Humility brings a growth of respect for life itself and every aspect of it. We won't all be Attenborough's breathing enthusiasm with every word, but we can get excited by every living thing, every marvel whether around us on earth or out to the farthest stretches of the universe.

There's a sense of responsibility grows as well which raises the issues of care, protection and careful use of the gifts of creation. In fact, we humans become the conscience of creation, and its voice and advocates.

A sense of the fragility and the tenderness of life and its environments and life systems sharpens the awareness that misuse can so easily upset the balance in nature, even destroy and annihilate.

We have the ability to critique the wasteful, thoughtless attitudes and life styles so many of us in wealthy countries expect as our birthright. To use as much water as we like is our right, argue many. We are not a third world country, they shout. Nanny state will not tell me how much water to use in my bathroom. The critique of these attitudes develops in the thoughtful contemplative who wants to reply, "But hold on a minute! Isn't it important to think about how much water we waste, how much power we use to

Humility brings a growth of respect for life itself and every aspect of it

heat that water, how much outflow from our houses the sewerage systems have to deal with" , and so on? If every person in the world demanded what we use and waste, could that be sustainable?

Then there's hope, hope that with all creation still in the hands of creating God and sustaining Lord what may seem hope-less in the face of current devastation and unsustainable living and human indulgence all is not lost. All will not be lost. The promise of a new creation, a new heaven and earth, whatever its ultimate meaning, certainly entails the regeneration of this planet and its systems, our only home.

Creation and contemplation - the indivisible duo, God's gifts, God's balancing act for the life and health of our physical and spiritual lives and futures.

DOMINATION OR DELIGHT?

Keith Carley

Many of those most knowledgeable about the environmental issues confronting Earth and her creatures in 2008 are doubtful about the possibility of our escaping environmental disaster. But those who live by faith in God's delight in Creation, and who attempt to live sustainably within Earth's varied and intricate life-systems, can help overcome the damage humans have done to the environment in recent centuries.

Among the several stories of creation in the Bible, Genesis 1:1-2:3 is by no means the oldest, but because of its prominence at the beginning of the Bible and its poetic structure it tends to dominate our conception of the event.¹ Its origins probably lie in what we today call Iraq, ancient Babylon, where the leaders of the Israelites – or Judeans to be precise – had been exiled because of their refusal to obey the Babylonian authorities under whom they had become a subject colony in the 7th century BC. The Babylonians, for all their military strength and cultural sophistication, believed the sun and moon were divine powers. Their sacred stories attributed creation to a male god, Apsu and a female goddess, Tiamat, who gave rise to other gods. Humans were formed from the blood of one of these gods, Kingu by name, when he was slain. How different is Genesis 1! There is no struggle between a multiplicity of gods. The God of Israel simply spoke and creation occurred. A Dutch scholar, Nico ter Linden, suggests that the author of Genesis chapter 1 was

perhaps “a bold priest ... demystifying the cosmos” when he wrote his song of faith against fear.

Genesis 1 repeats like a refrain the words “God saw that it was good” and the acts of creation conclude on the sixth day with the words, “God saw everything ... and it was very good” (Gen 1:31). But there is a problem in the story that we are seeing the outcome of most starkly in our own generation. Part of it comes in the form of human authority over the creatures: “God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle ...’;” and so on. It's one of the best known passages of scripture (Gen 1:26). But here's the rub. To “have dominion over” in the world of that time implied harsh authority. The Hebrew word translated “have dominion over” is *rdh*. When that word is used in Psalm 72 it describes the king of Jerusalem as conqueror of the whole earth, dominating his human enemies who are envisaged as literally “licking the dust” (vv. 8-9).

The words of Genesis 1:26 are repeated when God blesses humankind in verse 28, but this time the humans are not only given dominion over Earth but are told to “fill” and “subdue” it. Well, we have certainly filled the Earth, as Al Gore's *Earth in the Balance* and *An Inconvenient Truth* have shown so emphatically. But the word “subdue,” *kbsh* in Hebrew, in Genesis 1:28 means “to tread down, subordinate, or subdue.” It is used in Nehemiah 5:5 in reference to forcing people into slavery; in Esther 7:8 of violating a woman; and in 2 Samuel 8:11 of David subduing foreign nations. Thus, for all its good intent – and I don't want to ignore the positives in the passage – Genesis 1 commands humans to populate and to exploit the resources

of land, sea and air, with consequences that could not have been dreamt of at the time.

Psalm 8 presents a similar problem:

O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.² Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established;⁴ what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?⁵ Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor.⁶ You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet,⁷ all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,⁸ the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.⁹ O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! (NRSV)

It's a favourite psalm of many people and is widely regarded as one of the most inspiring, uplifting poems ever written. Humans, irrespective of gender and culture, are accorded a status only a little less than God. The psalm also conveys a sense of reverent wonder at the mystery of human existence as the authors contemplate the night sky. It may seem rude – even irreligious – to question this popular perception of the psalm, but there are features of it that hold dangerous

implications both for the environment and for social justice.

To envisage the scene pictorially, God is given an exulted place “above the heavens,” while some humans “have dominion” over other living creatures. The Hebrew word for “have dominion” in Ps 8:6 is different from the word used in Genesis 1:26. Instead of *rdh* we have *mashal*, but *mashal* has a very similar meaning. It is used of kings ruling over their subjects or over subject nations. That the other living creatures are “under the feet” of humans (v.6) conveys their subjection.

The psalm also conveys a sense of reverent wonder at the mystery of human existence as the authors contemplate the night sky.

But a difference between Psalm 8 and Genesis 1 is that not all humans are given dominion over the other living creatures. There is endless speculation as to exactly who “the enemy and the avenger” referred to in Psalm 8:2 might be, but it implies that humankind as a whole is not given dominion over the rest of creation. Genesis 1's vision of humankind as a single entity has given

way to the division between the good and the not-so-good. The “foes” of God may have been Israelites who failed to obey the laws in the way the temple leaders required, or they might have been foreigners. Either way, they are now the defeated, silenced, enemies of God.

So Psalm 8 can be seen as an apology for the theme of domination expressed in parts of the Bible. It stands in contrast to Genesis 1 in its distinction between humans, but it stands in even sharper contrast to our own growing awareness that Earth and all its creatures is a living organism in which all creatures are interdependent, whether

1 Other accounts of creation can be found in Gen 2:4-24; Pss 19, 33, 104; Isa 40-43, 45; as well as in Prov 8 and Job 38-41, which are briefly referred to below.

or not – with the environmentalist James Lovelock – we refer to Earth by the personal name “Gaia.”²

Lovelock’s is not a new insight. A little over forty years ago, in 1967, an important article was published in the journal *Science Magazine*. It was written by an American historian and active churchman, Lynn White Jr. Under the title “The Historic Roots of our Ecological Crisis,” White wrote: “Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt for the human attitude that we are superior to nature, contemptuous of it, willing to use it for our slightest whim. ... We shall continue

to have a worsening ecological crisis until we reject the Christian axiom that nature has no reason for existence save to serve man.”

Lynn White’s is by no means a lone voice. In the introduction to her monumental survey of the major world religions, *The Great Transformation*, Karen Armstrong writes: “We risk environmental catastrophe because we no longer see the earth as holy but regard it simply as a ‘resource’.”

Looking beyond Genesis 1 and Psalm 8, there are numerous other passages that reinforce the theme of Earth’s domination

2 See Lovelock’s *The Ages of Gaia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2nd ed. 1995) and *The Revenge of Gaia* (Penguin Allen Lane: London, 2006). “Gaia” was the Greek name for the supreme goddess of Earth. It has been used by Lovelock and others to refer to Earth as a self-regulating entity which has the capacity to keep our planet healthy by controlling the physical and chemical environment. The term has become a slogan for the environmental movement, but should no more be taken literally “than is the appellation ‘she’ when given to a ship by those who sail on her” (*The Ages of Gaia*, p.xv).

in the Christian Bible. Often it’s conveyed in prophetic judgments. In Ezekiel 12:19 Israel’s “promised land” is to be “stripped of all it contains, on account of the violence of all those who live in it.” The land of other nations is also to be laid waste. “When I make the land of Egypt desolate and when the land is stripped of all that fills it, when I strike down all who live in it, then they shall know that I am the LORD” (Ezek. 32:15).

“We risk environmental catastrophe because we no longer see the earth as holy...”

In other words, Earth suffers so God can make a point, or, perhaps it should be said, God’s authority is claimed, so as to make a point. And the New Testament has its own scenarios of doom in the Book of Revelation and elsewhere. Call all this prophetic hyperbole if you will, but we must ask whether such accounts of God’s behaviour have set precedents for punitive conflict in contemporary society, from Ireland and Vietnam, or Ruanda and Bosnia in the recent past, to Iraq and Georgia today, with their concomitant “collateral” damage to the infrastructures of those countries, not to mention the environmental damage done to their neighbours and the whole global ecosystem. While such acts may be claimed on behalf of one religion or another, today it is easier to recognise that such domination derives not from God but from individuals, institutions and governments in complex expressions of fear and greed.

The same can be said for the attitude toward nature taken even by such an erudite psychologist and philosopher as William James a century ago. The author of the widely-read book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, first published in 1902, also wrote an essay likening

the conquest of nature to “The Moral Equivalent of War.” Instead of military conscription he argued that young men should, for a certain number of years, be part of an army “enlisted against nature.” Elsewhere he wrote of nature’s “brutality” overturning our peace. There appears to have been no awareness that nature was already suffering the effects of setting humanity and the rest of nature at odds.

How different from what we’ve been considering is Jesus’ conception of God in Matthew chapter 5:

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous (vv.44-45).

Domination is not the only, nor the most important way God’s relationship to creation is conveyed in the Bible. Take Proverbs chapter 8, for instance. In the latter half of that chapter, Wisdom, portrayed as a woman, is said to be the first of all God’s creatures – an observer, but also a co-creator of the universe, as the heavens are established, along with the first bits of Earth’s soil.

“I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world ...”

The Hebrew is complex but the sense is conveyed of Woman Wisdom as a partner in whose work God delighted and who in turn rejoiced in both the world and its human creatures:

I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race (vv.30-31).

The book of Job, chapters 38-41, also describes the creation and all its creatures

– both tame and fearsome – as mysteries known to God alone and certainly beyond the control of mere humans. “Who will put a leash on Leviathan – a legendary sea monster – that it might serve as a puppy for your daughters?” God asks in Job 41:1-5. Contemporary discussion about the culling of sea creatures could well be critiqued from this perspective. The puzzle of why God causes rain to fall “on a land where no one lives, on the desert, which is empty of life” (Job 38:26) is another expression of God’s unfathomable generosity to people often troubled by drought, even if global warming is now producing too much rain in places that are full of life!

Another passage in Matthew’s gospel comes to mind at this point:

I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26

Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? 28 And why do you worry about

clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you – you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ (Matt 6:25-31).

Even common birds are provided for by God, so humans need not be anxious about the necessities of life. There are sufficient resources to go around providing that we can restrain our greed and resist destroying Earth in the process of their extraction, processing and distribution.

There's not been space to consider the reasons for global warming, the current food crisis, alternative energy sources, etc. We need to be aware of such issues. But how we deal with them as Christians will depend on recognising how much we have and discerning how we can share it equitably with others.

We have the benefit, in Aotearoa New Zealand, of the strong conviction of Maori and other Polynesian people that the whole of creation is alive. The traditional story of Rata, who hewed a canoe out of a tōtara tree that he cut down without first seeking the approval of its guardian spirit and the lifting of its protective tapu, is another reminder that we must treat the whole Earth as a living being.³

³ See further John Patterson's study *People of the Land: A Pacific Philosophy* (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 2000).

WATCHING THE MOON RISE

Mark Laurent

When I was about 12 years old, my scout troop went on a camping weekend on the Miranda Coast. That first night we pitched our pup-tents in a paddock right by the beach, made a campfire and settled down to heat baked beans and toast marshmallows. It was nearing sunset and I must have noticed the roseate shift in the light because I glanced up and there,

In that vein, let's imagine how Earth might respond to the authors of Psalm 8:

There they go again, praising,
as if God was some object outside
the very life we all share.
How long will it be before humans learn
to recognise God also in their so-called
"foes"? - really their own enemies,
for God has no favourites
except in myths of privilege
that lead to endless cycles of
oppression and despair.
Listen now!
how they pride themselves on
being superior to the animals,
on whose life they depend
for clothes, and labour, even food.
Dominion!
to destroy the very staples of life?
O God, your majesty will one day be
better served
when they see you in my wine and
bread.

So, as we contemplate and learn from Earth, may we grow to share God's own delight in it, and in us, and live generously and with joy, for Christ's sake.

across the millpond ocean, hung the huge full moon, blood red and marvellous, just clearing the horizon. I can still picture that moon, re-inhabit that evening, though I've watched so many sunsets and moonrises since. I sat transfixed, gazing in wonder as it turned through orange to pearl, rising ever so slowly into the darkening sky.

Childhood seems, in memory, to have been full of epiphanies; mum taking me out into the garden on a frosty morning to see the Morning Glory, with their bright blue petals and yellow hearts opening to the sun; the thrill of standing on the rim

of the Mt Eden crater, bouncing stones into the abyss. As children, most of us are deeply engaged with creation; splashing puddles in bare feet; pushing through long grass on humid, sunny afternoons; burying our hands in sand.

I've occasionally wondered whether, if I hadn't met Jesus, I might have ended up a nature worshipper. But I did meet him, and one of the ways I knew he was with me was that the world took on fresh dimensions. I hadn't yet, in that honeymoon flush of first love, read St Paul's words in Romans 1:20 about how creation shows us God's invisible qualities, but I knew this in my heart. Rocks and trees seemed numinous, colours and flavours were richer, every leaf and petal trembled with spirit. Do you remember those days?

Of course epiphanies are fleeting things, and the requirements of being part of 'reasonable' society - a family, a career - all these things tend to narrow our vision to specifics, often drawing our attention from the 'big story' going on around and within us. But not long after I became a Christian I started writing my first songs and poetry, and there the joy of creation crept back into my life by way of imagery, analogy, and outbursts of gratitude for God's goodness. I also started to notice how much Jesus drew on nature for his teaching.

My first awareness of the ecological crisis actually came through Christian apocalyptic writers like Hal Lindsay. 'We're living in the last days' was a hugely popular theme in the 1970s. Of course, the overwhelming conclusion - in evangelical circles at least - was that this was inevitable and there was no point in trying to do

anything about it. For a long time, I pretty much succumbed to this view. But in 1988 I met my future wife Brenda, and she had been for a number of years a green activist in Australia, and held very different views about how we should respond to the natural world and its problems. She also had a rather scathing opinion of the Judeo-Christian culture and the church for our irresponsible attitudes and our doctrine of 'dominion', which basically seemed to make excuses for 'business as usual'. The theology I'd been brought up in had no adequate answers to this passionate challenge. I had to ask God about it, and to start searching for myself.

*... much of God's
love comes to us
through the gift of
life and the world
around us ...*

In time I discovered that there were a few 'green' Christians out there, although in the early days most of the writing was too theological for the general public. But the idea that God really did want us to be good stewards of creation, and that he intends to redeem nature as well as us, galvanised both Brenda and me, and gave us the germ of a message, which we felt we wanted to take to the church, and to the community in general.

I had already been working as an itinerant musician/Christian communicator for well over a decade, and more recently Brenda had joined me, so we gently started introducing a few green themes to our presentations at services, outreach concerts etc. At first, I think some churches found this a bit radical, perhaps worrying that 'green' was the same as 'new age'. But also something of the intuitive knowing we all carry - that much of God's love comes to us through the gift of life and the world around us - began to be rekindled in people's hearts and the responses we got were often warm, interested, excited

even. People would say things like, “I always felt that way, but nobody ever talks about it at church and I wasn’t sure if I was supposed to.”

In the early days our approach tended to be along the lines of, “Look what a mess the world is in! For too long the church has been silent. We are children of the creator, so why don’t we honour his creation? We need to change our ways.” These are true sayings, and people would nod their heads. But not a lot seemed to change in the practice of most Christian communities, except that perhaps they’d include a mention of creation in their liturgies. I could sense that something else was needed – that the real connection has to happen for each of us in the heart, in our experience, and not just because something sounds like ‘a good idea’.

It’s a bit like being ‘born again’. I had heard of Jesus at mass as a child, but it took a deep personal encounter in an empty church to make me ‘know’ Jesus in my soul (and decide to follow him in my lifestyle). I have seen many sunsets and moonrises, but one particular moonrise entered my being. This is the sort of knowing that makes us respond - to God, to a loved one, to creation. These days, when Brenda and I do ‘green’ events, this is the sort of knowing we try to encourage others to find - or rediscover - within themselves. Poetry and music seem to be quite good tools for evoking this awareness.

The media is full of ‘sustainability’, ‘resource management’, ‘greenhouse emissions’ etc, and you can feel a bit like a broken record banging away about ‘saving the planet’ nowadays. Over time we’ve felt less need to be eco-evangelists, and our green values have become woven into the fabric of what we hope is a more whole-of-life approach in our work. The essential thing is to live what you believe, and believe what you live. Then it can’t help but surface in the things you say, and seep out of your pores. After a decade or more Brenda and I were feeling a bit weary of carrying the ‘Christian Greenie’ flag, and thankfully others have taken over, and in fact are doing a far better job than we did of growing a community of Christian stewards. It’s great to see it.

One day the sun will grow pale and the moon will stop rising. One day creation will be rolled up like a blanket, and God will change it for a brand new creation. One day our bodies will reach the end of their usefulness and Jesus will call each of us into our new, non-degradable bodies. But until these things happen, it’s part of our job here on earth to use and look after ourselves, each other, and this world he’s blessed us with, as well as we can. I’m looking forward to hearing him say “Well done, son – thanks for keeping an eye on things for me”.

I have seen many sunsets and moonrises, but one particular moonrise entered my being.

The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it,
the world and all its inhabitants.

Psalm 24:1

A SPIRITUALITY OF HOME-MAKING IN A PROPERTY-DEALING WORLD

Andrew Shepherd

Throughout the course of human history, the metaphor of ‘home-making’ has played an important role, both in shaping our identity and in defining the appropriate practices for living peacefully within the world. For *tangata whenua*, in Aotearoa/New Zealand, identity (shaped by one’s *whakapapa-iwi, hapu* and *whanau*) manifests itself in the concept of *turangawaewae*, of having a ‘place to stand’. It is ‘home’ on the *marae* where one’s identity shaped by relationships with both the living and the dead expresses itself in practices which honour the *mana* of these relationships – in particular, the fundamental relationship with *Papatuanuku*.

Similarly, the concept of ‘home-making’ was central to the ‘colonising’ actions of early ‘pioneers’, though arguably less holistically and at times downright damaging. The fact that many of the early colonists’ actions consisted of attempting to transform this ‘new land’ into an imitation of the ‘home’ they had left behind in Europe does not negate the existence of a ‘home-making’ impulse. Into the 20th Century, New Zealand’s fascination with ‘home-making’ – of each person owning their own ‘slice of paradise’ – and the emergence of the ¼ acre sections of suburbia, meant that by the late 1960’s NZ had one of the highest home-ownership rates of any country in the world.

But in recent decades many New Zealanders have developed a fascination not with ‘home-making’, but rather

with ‘purchasing property’ as a form of investment.¹ Typically, such activity has consisted of purchasing a house, making some quick renovations and then re-selling the house a couple of years later. The capital gain, made as a result of the seemingly interminable ‘property-boom’ is then either put into the bank, re-invested in a new ‘property’ higher up the real estate ladder, or ultimately allows the individual to purchase one’s ‘dream home’. Within this schema, houses come to be understood not primarily as ‘homes’ but rather as commodities, and the critical determinant for deciding where one should domicile has often been the potentiality for economic gain.

This contrast between owning a home and ‘home-making’ was perhaps most vividly demonstrated to me recently during a period of four years living in New Zealand’s largest city. With the property-market booming, it was not unusual to see nine or ten (and sometimes even more) “For Sale” signs at any one time, scattered up and down either side of the relatively small cul-de-sac in which we resided. The arrival of these signs was usually preceded by a period of frenetic activity (two or three months) where the necessary ‘re-dressing’ and preparation for market took place. As well as any unobserved interior changes, such renovation work almost always consisted of the obligatory repainting of the house-exterior, the erection of a large fence around the section – therefore blocking the house from sight – and the removal of front lawns, trees and other greenery, to be replaced by concrete parking-pads, and/or low-maintenance

1 New Zealand’s steadily declining home-ownership rate is largely attributable to this phenomenon of the purchasing of investment properties which has forced up house prices and therefore made it more difficult for those less economically affluent to purchase a ‘home’.

paving stones, with an occasional plot-plant attempting to deflect from the new barren landscape.²

This frenzied activity of house-buying and selling taking place not only in Auckland but around the country during the last decade has been seen almost exclusively in overwhelmingly positive terms, evidence of an energetic and growing economy. There are though, I believe, at least two clear problems stemming from this approach to 'housing' influenced by a reductionist economic vision. The first of these is being increasingly recognised: the decline in social cohesion – what sociologists refer to as a loss

of 'social capital'. This is the inevitable consequence of communities that are comprised of isolated, autonomous individuals, whose nomadic existence is shaped by both an internal desire and societal pressures to 'get-ahead' economically, or who, as tenants, live at the mercy of rent increases that may force relocation.

A property-purchasing mentality in which economic mobility is linked to geographical mobility, that is, moving-upward economically is seen as dependent on 'moving on', inevitably creates itinerant individuals and therefore transient societies. This loss of interconnectedness, or 'neighbourliness', and an accompanying lament for the relationships of trust and security that formerly characterised New Zealand society, is one that is increasingly being discussed. But the other negative impact of this constantly changing

2 During our four years living on the street, a number of properties were bought and sold two or three times.

and transient existence, less frequently discussed, is the potentially devastating effects such a phenomenon has on our relationship with the non-human other, that is, creation itself.

Healthy relationships with fellow humans have the potential to grow and develop into relationships of mutual concern, care and love – what the Bible refers to as relationships of *shalom* – as one spends time *being* with one another. Likewise, a healthy relationship with the earth, from which we come (*humans* from *humus*) and which we are called to care for and 'steward', is dependent on *time* and *proximity*. It is as we spend

time within creation, *inhabiting, dwelling, becoming* 'rooted', that we begin to appreciate the complexity of this *other*. It is during the course of time that we both develop a greater understanding, knowledge, love and affinity with the *o/Other* – whether the Divine Other, the human other, or creation itself – and yet simultaneously become more aware of how little we really know them. It is face to face with the intricacy and wonder of the *o/Other* that we begin to appreciate that the sheer otherness of the *o/Other* means³ we can never 'know' them completely. This relationship between 'home-making' and time, and the contrast to that of simply

3 Central to such thinking is the assumption that 'knowledge' is not to be construed as 'power-over' the *o/Other* – and therefore seen as an oppressive and violent action – but rather true knowledge is suffused in and shaped by love.

4 Kimberley Dovey, "Home and Homelessness," in I. Altman and C. Werner, eds., *Home Environments* (New York: Plenum Books, 1985), p.54, quoted in Steven Bouma-Prediger and Brian Walsh, *Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement* (Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 2008), 57-8.

owning a property is expressed well by Kimberley Dovey, who states:

Home is a relationship that is created and evolved over time; it is not consumed like the products of economic process. The house is a tool for the achievement of the experience of home.⁴

The relationship between our knowledge of creation – derived from our loving attention and study over a period of time – and our ensuing treatment of it, is similarly expressed well in the etymological link between the words *ecology* and *economy*. Steven Bouma-Prediger and Brian Walsh in their recent book *Beyond Homelessness* note that:

The Greek word *oikos* (eco-) means house or household, thus "ecology" is the *logos* of the *oikos*, that is, the study of the household, and "economics" is the *nomos* of the *oikos*, the law or the rules of the household.... [E]cology is the study of individuals and populations, communities and habitats, life systems and dynamics of the household, and of what

is required for living well. Economics is the study of how to respectfully care for and manage the earth so that the various requirements of the household are met and sustained, so that the household is hospitable for all its inhabitants. **Ecology is the knowledge necessary for good home economics.**⁵

5 Ibid., 185-6.

The fundamental problem arising from the property-purchasing phenomenon prevalent within New Zealand is the extent to which it has depended on and exacerbated a bifurcating of ecology from economics. The intimate relationship between ecology and economics in which becoming 'rooted' and 'making home' enables one to spend *time* to begin to understand and appreciate the complexities, wonder and mystery of the ecosystem within which we exist (and which accordingly then shapes – dare we use the ubiquitous word – a "lifestyle" which encourages a mutual fruitfulness between human and the non-human other) has come under serious assault in our contemporary age.

While certainly not the only factor, the 'property-purchasing' phenomenon can be seen as both the *consequence* of and simultaneously the *motivating energy* behind a sense of "homelessness" affecting present-day Aotearoa/New Zealand. In our obsession with a narrowly-construed economic-growth we have lost sight of a broader vision of 'home-making', but simultaneously the desire for economic gain, visibly expressed in the

phenomenon of 'property-speculation' has led to a further sense of disengagement and distancing from the land. Living transiently, in a "homeless" existence, the inability to respond to the *call* to live faithfully as caretakers/stewards of the earth, the house (*oikos*) of God, the failure to nurture and assist creation in becoming a 'home' of peace and hospitality, results not merely in a major deficiency in our own lives, but also, as we are increasingly discovering, threatens our very existence.

... the inability to respond to the call to live faithfully as caretakers/stewards of earth, the house (oikos) of God ...

The good news is that those who find a new home and dwelling in Jesus⁶, the *Home-Making King*, who through his life, death and resurrection has ‘reconciled to himself all things’ (Colossians 1:15-20), are inhabited by the Spirit of Christ who calls us and empowers us again to live as ‘home-makers’. In our daily lives, we are to witness to the hope that in Christ all of creation is being made new (Revelation 21:5). In contrast to a world of ‘postmodern migrants and homeless consumers’, it is the children of this *Home-Making Father*, Bouma-Prediger and Walsh believe, who are called to create homes which are places of permanence, in which we dwell and tell stories; places which are known as safe places providing ‘rest’ from the hustle and bustle of life and which offer hospitality to those weary of wandering; places of embodied inhabitation in which ‘care and cultivation’ is extended to both human and non-human inhabitants, and which therefore provide a new orientation and a new community of affiliation and belonging.⁷

As a family we were fortunate to find such a place on the same street inexorably caught in the perpetual change brought about by a buoyant house-market. In stark contrast to the hard lines of newly constructed

6 The imagery of Jesus as providing a new home/dwelling is particularly prominent throughout the Fourth Gospel, with the Greek verb *menein* (to “abide” “stay” “dwell”) used both to indicate the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son, but also the “home” that those through faith discover in Jesus. Thus in John 1:38-39 the verb *menein* is used three times in describing the search of the disciples and the discovery of a new “home” in Jesus.

7 For an extended description of such a phenomenology of home see Bouma-Prediger and Walsh, *Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement*, 56-65.

fences, and the sterility and barren nature of newly ‘landscaped’ frontages, was the Christian community where we lived at end of the cul-de-sac. Surrounded by mature trees and bordered by a stream, many visitors to the community often spoke of the site as being an oasis, situated as it was in the midst of an urban context. Consisting of a cluster of houses on shared land, with no dividing fences, the sense of physical spatiality seemed to flow over to relationships that were characterised by hospitality, generosity and mutual concern. This desire to live in harmony with all *Others*, the desire to create ‘homes’ that gave witness to the love of God found in Christ, was evident also in the fruitful gardens (both vegetable and flower), the restoration of eroded land by the replanting of native trees, and intensive recycling measures.

Living in such a community in close relationship with *others*, while full of much joy and delight, as with all close relationships, also involved times of pain, anguish and sorrow. And, herein lies, I suspect, part of the reasoning for the temptation in our contemporary society for a transient existence, living disconnected from each other and the earth. Perhaps the seeking to exist without roots is simply our poor attempt to deafen ourselves to the ‘groanings of creation’ and the accompanying response demanded by such hearing.

The breaking news of the last few weeks has been the economic meltdown on Wall St and the potentially calamitous flow-on affect this financial crisis will have on the rest of the world. Here in Aotearoa/New Zealand, the house-market is slowing rapidly, property prices are dropping,

and mortgagee sales are on the increase. Whether we really face the possibility of a return to the *Great Depression* with the accompanying burgeoning in both unemployment and genuine ‘homelessness’ remains to be seen, and is in many ways a frightening prospect. But at the risk of sounding macabre, there may, I suggest, be a silver-lining to the current financial crisis. If the global credit-crunch results in a transformation of our economic visions, one in which social and ecological capital are given the same weighting as monetary capital, then there is the possibility of a serious renovation to our concepts of housing and a renewal of a spirituality of ‘home-making’.

Reference:
Bouma-Prediger, Steven, and Brian Walsh. *Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement*. Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 2008.

WHERE SUSTAINABLE AND CONTEMPLATIVE LIFESTYLES CAN MEET

Jocelyn Dale

My aim here is to reflect on how sustainability and contemplation can be related in living one’s life. It has come about as I recently noticed and used the word sustainable in various contexts.

Sustainability is a word with uses beyond ecology. Our faith communities have recently been offered a month’s retreat in daily life. It was an opportunity to ‘take off your shoes’, to notice God’s presence in our everyday lives, to try out different ways of attuning ourselves to God with the help of our prayer coach. At the end

of this experimental month, we were invited to choose a sustainable way ahead in the light of what we had experienced. Which practices would we take up more permanently, and which were not so suitable? How would we fine-tune our lives so that we could hear more clearly God’s invitations?

The whole idea of contemplation has a sustainable air to it, for it is as we take time to reflect, to be and give ourselves a break from the busy ‘doing’ that is so common in our society, that we find ourselves revitalised. Many people who have voluntarily climbed off the treadmill of busyness or activism claim to have discovered a more rewarding and generative lifestyle. In my case, it was as if my body ejected me from the ‘rat race’, for I had not realised that I was ‘doing too much’. Now, ten years later, although I miss at times the intellectual fulfilment of professional life, I enjoy the daily invitation to re-energise myself in contemplation, creativity and physical exercise. The other plus comes when one is quiet enough to hear God’s invitation, however shocking, surprising or elevating that may be! One does not have to abandon a busy life to find such quiet, as indeed we found on our ‘take off your shoes’ month. We are then challenged to live out God’s invitations. Even answering the call to help a fellow human being, as Austin Hemmings did so recently with its huge cost, is an inspiring result of prayer.

Living sustainably with respect to consumption is, may I suggest, also an act of prayer. To grow our food crops non-toxically or to transport ourselves with less recourse to fossil fuels is to wish the best for the planet. To prepare our food ourselves ‘from scratch’ is to be in touch with our body and environment, to remember the people who gave us the

recipe, and to make sustainable choices. To be part of the fair trade partnership is to welcome and respect each other as brothers and sisters. I delight in gardening, kneading bread, or preparing a simple meal from a recipe shared by friends. It is inspiring to be present to the creator of the planet while living sustainably... and I'm sure God smiles when we go gently on the planet.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND CHRISTIAN FAITH

Ray Galvin

There need be no argument that Christians should be concerned to mitigate human-induced climate change, and to support adaptation measures for the communities most likely to be affected by it.

We worship God as Creator of this wonderful planet. To a degree, our relationship with nature will always be ambivalent, as there are natural forces such as viruses and plant predators that we need to keep at bay in order to protect human life. But even when we manipulate and take dominion over aspects of nature for the short-term benefit of humanity, we need to do this as good stewards, working to preserve the fruitfulness of the earth for this and future generations.

And even if the themes of Creation and Stewardship were not part of the biblical witness, we would still be constrained to care for the earth, because of our love for one another. If we care about our neighbours far and near, rich and poor, present and future, we will work and act to ensure the earth remains fruitful and hospitable to human beings.

So it is not a question of *whether* Christians should be working to mitigate human-induced climate change, but of how.

At a recent conference in Cambridge, a leading climate scientist, Sir John Houghton, with many years experience on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and its former chair, made the claim that 'we know what we have to do to prevent climate change, we just need the political will to do it.'

Surprisingly, this made me slightly uneasy. I have heard this claim repeatedly from scientists and activists over the past few years, and it seems to be widely agreed upon, even by the leading politicians in both government and opposition in the UK, not to mention in the EU and the United Nations. Yet still we pump out increasing quantities of the greenhouse gasses (GHGs) that are the leading cause of climate change. Many nations now do have the political will, or at least a good dose of it, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. But the reductions are a very long time coming.

My research has led me to think that the solutions to GHG emissions are far more complex and detailed than many of us have previously thought. Human civilisation has come to be deeply and intimately dependent on the burning of fossil fuels over the last one-and-a-half centuries. If we were to reduce the burning of fossil fuels drastically and suddenly, hundreds of millions would starve or freeze to death. Yet if we do not reduce GHGs, earth's climate system is very likely to change so drastically that billions could die or become wretched.

Even a slight reduction in fossil fuel usage could cause widespread hardship and unrest. When Russia cut the natural gas

supply to Western Europe in two recent winters, albeit only temporarily, there was shock and horror among western leaders as to how people would respond if their apartments turned frigid.

Our industrial, oil-hungry way of life is finely tuned, and any reduction in one area could have massive knock-on effects in others.

This is an enormous dilemma for anyone who cares about humanity. How can we reduce GHGs significantly, persistently, without causing the global system to unravel and throwing millions of people into hardship?

My Christian faith is helping me to work through this issue. To begin with, at the very least, it helps me stand against the stream. I find myself critiquing not just the behaviour of oil-guzzling industries, but also of NGOs whose solutions to climate change seem too simplistic.

For example, I am not a fan of photovoltaics, solar electricity (PV). Despite nearly 60 years of expensive research, PV costs about five times as much money to produce a kilowatt-hour of energy as other renewable sources such as wind turbines. If I were in charge, I would slash the subsidies for PV and put the money to more efficient GHG reduction methods. This puts me at odds with most of the Green parties and NGOs on this side of the world (U.K.).

More important, my Christian world-view helps me see that evil, or 'inappropriate behaviour and approaches', is not confined to certain people or industries, but is present everywhere, in various

guises, and needs to be confronted in very detailed and intelligent ways. There is no 'one answer' to the problem of climate change. Our world order is dependent on GHGs in thousands of detailed, intricate ways, and each of these needs to be identified and addressed.

For example, one of the biggest sources of GHGs in icy Europe is the heating systems in our homes and buildings. Europe could reduce its GHGs by some 12 percent just by properly insulating and thermal-glazing its huge stock of 'older' (pre-1990) buildings. This is very cheap, per kilowatt-hour of energy saved, but for the average householder it is relatively expensive - say around \$NZ30,000 for an average apartment or semi-detached house.

So we then have to ask, who should pay for it? It might be unjust to require a homeowner to increase her mortgage by \$30,000, as that puts her at risk of losing her house if she loses her job and can't keep up the payments.

But such problems are not insurmountable. We need to devise intelligent, thoughtful, creative solutions, tailored in a very detailed way to suit the needs of actual people. My faith leads me to believe that if thousands of us set out to do this, we will cover huge amounts of ground, identify the actual nature of thousands of blockages to GHG reduction, and come up with workable solutions.

My faith also calls me to love individuals and not just 'humanity.' Humanity will benefit in the long run from massive GHG reductions, but millions of individuals could suffer painfully and dangerously

*We need
to devise
intelligent,
thoughtful,
creative
solutions ...*

if we switch off their heating, sever their food transport routes, take away their jobs in heavy industry, and make their electricity supply erratic and unreliable. As Christians, we are constrained to seek solutions to climate change that look after both humanity and individuals.

Further, Christian faith makes me aware that happiness is not enhanced by having more than I need. In Cambridge I don't need a car, so I don't have one. I ride a bike. The unexpected benefit is that I'm fitter than ever, and do an annual summer cycle tour on the Continent (living in a very small tent!) and enjoying its varied terrains and cultures at close quarters.

Not everybody could live without a car. But most people don't need to drive theirs as often as they do, since most car journeys are only a few kilometres.

We got rid of our television too. Most programs are boring and mindless, the TV uses too much power, and takes up too much room in our tiny British lounge.

There are many things we have today that we don't need, and that produce GHGs. We can't generalise as to who needs what, but as Christians we can shout a bit louder to awaken people's consciences. People need to be challenged to re-think all aspects of their daily lives and habits – food, entertainment, travel, clothes, gadgets, buildings – and be honest with themselves as to what is necessary and what is dead weight.

Finally, as a child of the Reformation, I'm very much aware that the Church has a role in persuading government to promote good and restrain evil on a larger scale. It's fine persuading individuals to change their lifestyle, but that's not enough. For every good-hearted individual who cuts

his GHG emissions by 2 tonnes a year, ten other individuals increase theirs by a tonne or more each. Only governments can pass the laws and implement the policies needed to get GHG reduction going on a big enough scale to make a real difference. We need to prod and cajole and inform and educate and require our governments to act on this – including all that has been said above about fine details and tailor-made solutions.

It's good to have faith in Christ in such a crucial time in history. It's good to know that despite the inadequacies of our efforts, God can 'do far more abundantly than all we can ask or think.' If we work diligently, in our limited, stumbling way, for GHG reductions and a future with a habitable, fruitful earth, I trust that we'll be surprised, from time to time, by unexpected bursts of progress.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ASIA'S RIVERS

Craig Drown

When I was young a family story told how a "townie" staying on an Uncle's farm noted that his family got their milk from the dairy, not from the dirty old cow. I expect most Kiwi families have similar stories that highlight urban detachment from our environment. Much energy is put into ensuring that no event can affect our ability to go about our lives as "normal".

Here in Asia, (I live in Kathmandu, Nepal) even urban dwellers have a much closer linkage to the ebb and flow of the seasons. Their electricity goes off (I'm writing this by the light of a small fluorescent tube attached to a car battery), their taps don't run for a large percentage of the time in the

dry season. They wade through flooded streets in the monsoon. For rural dwellers the monsoon is a combination of growth and risk. The countryside turns lush with growth, but too much rain can wash away crops, roads and even whole villages.

As bad as these seasonal fluctuations can be, they are greatly reduced by the huge reservoir of snow and ice that makes up the Himalayan glaciers. In the Western Himalayas sixty percent of river flows are from snow or glaciers. They accumulate water when it falls, and then release it evenly year-round. Hundreds of millions of people in Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, China and India rely on glacier-fed rivers for both drinking water and irrigation of their crops.

Even with the current rate of melting, it is unlikely there will be any glaciers left in 100 years time. With increased global temperatures, Himalayan glaciers won't last our lifetime. Unlike other climate related changes in our world, it seems the damage may already have been done by our generation, and the consequences will be felt by Asia's children and their children. During the next 30 to 50 years there will be increased river flows across Himalayan rivers as the glaciers melt, but once the glaciers start to lose the bulk of their mass, flows will significantly reduce. Some studies calculate certain rivers reducing by as much as ninety percent. This will be combined with a greater need for water as increased temperatures increase evaporation rates, as populations continue to increase, and as crop yields decline due to temperature increases.

To make matters worse, a heavier monsoon combined with a higher percentage falling as rain rather than snow, will result in a greater likelihood of floods over the summer. Not much consolation for a dry winter.

The potential effects these changes on Asia are hard to imagine, but it is quite possible that along with the suffering of those directly affected, there will also be forced migration that could have immense social and political consequences.

The loss of alpine beauty should in itself be enough reason to act, and certainly compassion should still motivate us, but now we must add the thought that there is a causal relationship between the energy use of our own countries, of us, and the future ability of Asians to grow the food they need to survive. Helping the poor becomes an act of attempting to mitigate the damage we will have caused. *Kýrie, eléison.*

References:

Chaulagain, Narayan Prasad, 2006: *Impacts of Climate Change on Water Resources of Nepal: The Physical and Socioeconomic Dimensions*. PhD thesis.

Rees, G. and Collins, D., 2004: *An Assessment of the Potential Impacts of Deglaciation on the Water Resources of the Himalayas*. DFID KAR project #R7980.

"NOT EVEN SOLOMON" (OVER PAGE)

A quilt by Ruth de Vos of Western Australia Quilters Association. 180cm x 147cm. It was displayed recently at the NZ Quilters' Association Show in Hamilton.

Ruth de Vos: "These vibrant blossoms were dancing on their pale stems with no regard for the more sombre foliage surrounding them. The frivolity of the blossoms, contrasted with the line and form of the tough and sturdy leaves, display the beautiful attention to detail in God's creation. I wanted to capture some of this by playing with positive and negative space, value differences and contrasting colour."



GIVE US SOME OF YOUR OIL

Eric Dodd

The parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25 verses 1-13 lends itself to the looming oil crisis with the threat of 'peak oil' which would appear to be either imminent or has already peaked. For the past three years oil production has struggled to remain at 74 million barrels per day (11,765 million litres) whilst the current world's consumption is about 87 million barrels per day. Liquified and natural gas supplies tend to make up the difference. The rate of consumption is constrained in a price demand/supply relationship as previously shown during the successive oil crisis situations that occurred during the Arab Oil embargo in 1979 and during the Iranian revolution and the subsequent Iran/Iraq war of 1980. When calm again returned to the Middle East, oil dropped back in price to \$10 per barrel and like the 10 maidens who fell asleep when the bridegroom was a long time in coming, worldwide concern for energy conservation and self-sufficiency in liquid fuels went into hibernation. The low price continued with minor fluctuations through to 1998 and between 1995 and 2008 global oil demand increased markedly precipitating a surge in oil production. New production fields however only just compensated for those fields that were becoming depleted. e.g. over 20 years ago there were 15 oil fields each capable of supplying one million barrels per day and now there are only four. Recently also, despite exhortations by President Bush, Saudi Arabia was only marginally able to increase production and it would now appear that with only a relatively minor glitch in the supply situation, oil prices are likely to be adversely affected.

The price of crude oil has risen fivefold in the past four years and whilst the price has recently dropped back somewhat from the high of \$135 per barrel, this has occurred as a consequence of the slowing economies in the United States, Europe and China. However, Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley finance houses are predicting that, in the not too distant future, prices may go as high as \$200 per barrel. Furthermore, even with the expected impact of significant incremental costs, only a temporary postponement of the pending global oil shortfall situation is considered likely. The engineering and geological facts must be that a lack of new reserves coming on stream will inevitably be unable to cope with a steadily rising demand as developing countries consume ever increasing amounts of energy required to bring their population to a higher standard of living.

Maximum oil discoveries occurred back in 1964 and new oil field finds now require much more sophisticated technology. It also becomes much more difficult to recover what oil there is left. It follows that there is a growing realisation that we are teetering on the edge of an economic catastrophe. It seems inconceivable that the world could function without a ready supply of oil. However we are dealing with a drug we are addicted to, and looking to the future our whole lifestyle may have to change unless suitable alternatives can be developed. In the absence of any corrective action, we may find that 'our lamps are going out' and the suppliers of oil, like the 'five wise maidens' may not be obliged to provide us with any assistance. Alternatives must thus be urgently sought. The traditionally optimistic International Energy Agency (IEA) now foresees an oil supply crunch from 2012 and a report published by the U.S. Department of Energy in 2005 argued

that unless the world begins a crash programme of replacements 10 or 20 years before oil peaks, a crisis 'unlike any yet faced by modern industrial society' is unavoidable. Those countries, in which oil supplies become a scarce commodity, face serious dislocations in transport, a complete breakdown in international trade and a loss of domestic necessities such as food distribution, emergency services and daily commerce.

At present, just 3.4% of the world's power comes from alternative energy sources with the bulk, some 67%, still derived from fossil fuels such as coal and oil. Hydro projects represent 15 % of power generation and nuclear 14%. Last year, in recognition of this dependence on oil, US\$148 billion was invested world wide in the renewable energy sector. In New Zealand, as in most countries, energy sources are inextricably linked. However, as far as liquid transport fuels are concerned, these are derived from refining imported crude oil and NZ condensate. Alternative fuels from biofuels, diesel from tallow, CNG and LPG etc are not considered likely to be able to provide a complete replacement for crude oil in the short term. Oil and gas exploration around New Zealand must therefore continue to be encouraged by providing an adequate return on investment. In this respect the large gas and oil condensate field, Pohokura was brought on line at the end of 2006 and eventually the gas is expected to feed three major power stations as well as the new Huntly power station. The addition of the Maari and the Kupe field in early 2009 will also further help to cushion the predicted worldwide oil constrained situation. The problem

still exists however to provide a supply of liquid transport fuels when crude oil supplies begin to dwindle. The Motunui Gas-to-Gasoline plant running on Maui and Kapuni gas supplies was previously able to assist in self-sufficiency in liquid energy fuels however the price structure for gasoline (petrol) eventually made this an uneconomic proposition.

Our over-reliance on liquid fuels derived from imported oil can be mitigated by combined gas-cycle-turbine power stations, the alternative use of electrical power including the electrification and revitalisation of rail services, improved public bus services and the greater use of hybrid vehicles as well as the expected introduction of electric powered vehicles using improved battery technology. Transport fuel for aviation use, however, still remains a problem

and in this case an alternative fuel source must be found to replace the five million barrels of jet fuel consumed worldwide every day. Large reserves of brown (lignite) coal exists in New Zealand, and in South Africa, Sasol Coal-to-Liquid (CTL) conversion plants based on the Fisher-Tropsch process, first developed in Germany, are used to manufacture jet fuel as well as other liquid hydrocarbon products. The manufacturing process also generates significant amounts of carbon dioxide and today, this would make such plants prohibitive unless a sequestering (capture) process could be developed. One promising process for the removal of carbon dioxide is to make use of it as a nutrient to feed a specific micro-algae type in large open ponds. Given the right conditions the algae multiplies quickly and when harvested, it can be made to produce lipid oils which can then

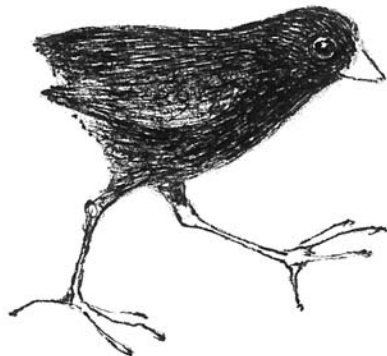
*... carbon dioxide
... a nutrient to feed
specific micro-algae
type in large, open
ponds.*

be turned into biofuels. The company 'Aquaflow' in Marlborough is currently growing micro-algae in a process to purify water and has also demonstrated this oil recovery technique from which jet fuel can be produced. This process can also be used in conjunction with any carbon dioxide producing source such as fuel gas from fossil fueled power stations. Biomass can also be sourced from waste construction timber and existing forestry and a biomass to liquid (BTL) process by means of the Fischer-Tropsch reaction can also be implemented to produce liquid fuels. Latest technology has demonstrated that alternatively, cellulosic ethanol can be produced from this biomass feedstock through a fermentation process and therefore the problem of converting vast areas of cultivated land for growing corn for fermentation to alcohol, is obviated.

We are on a collision course and alternative forms of energy as well as conservation measures as promoted by the emissions trading scheme, are needed to avoid an energy crisis as well as global warming. Nuclear energy is not considered a viable proposition for New Zealand since apart from political, safety and public issues, we lack the infrastructure that is present

in those countries that have lived with this form of energy for many years e.g. France. The use of NZ coal reserves which could last for some 300-500 years must be expected to provide for alternative liquid fuels in the future. However, technology must first be brought to bear to solve the carbon dioxide emission problem. There is a need to establish a centralised approach unencumbered by political manoeuvring and one proposal may be to implement the careful introduction of a more robust Ministry of Energy and a reinstatement of the Liquid Fuels Trust Board. The oil industry needs to be encouraged to participate in the development of alternative fuels and car companies must also be encouraged to produce vehicle motors that also meet this requirement. e.g. electric vehicles. However, unless there is a concerted effort to offset the impact of reduced availability of imported crude oil, we will be like the 'five foolish maidens' who have left it too late and technological change coupled with conservation measures will not occur early enough and hence we will be 'locked out' and forced to suffer the consequences.

Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.



Pukeko Chick

IN WHAT WAYS DOES THE NATURAL WORLD DEEPEN MY AWARENESS OF THE SPIRIT?

Grace Sutherland

For most of my adult life, walking and long-distance tramping have been about experiencing a new challenge in the outdoors; sharing a love of the outdoors with family or friends; seeing near or remote parts of the countryside that one can only reach on foot; getting to the top of some high point to look at the world from there; experiencing the grandeur of mountains and high passes; the physical challenge of coping with weather and terrain and the discomforts of back country huts; the satisfaction of having been there or done that on foot; of being somewhere else so absorbed in the present that the other world "back home" was forgotten for a while.

I have marvelled at the beauty of waterfalls and mountain streams, of sunrise glow on a mountain peak and the power of geological forces such as glaciers and powerful rivers that carve and create our landscape. Sunlight filtering through our green New Zealand forest beside a bubbling, twinkling stream or a tumbling clear blue mountain river always helps to lighten my load, bringing enjoyment and appreciation to what is often a strenuous exercise.

In all of this I don't remember consciously experiencing any spiritual awareness of a Divine Creator of this natural world, - "God" as Creator. Recently however, I am valuing the outdoors in a more personally spiritual way. Increasingly I appreciate

the taking time to pause and be still, to stop, sit, and listen, experiencing a place in Nature for its peace and calming effect. By learning to simply *be* in a place, I feel absorbed into something larger than myself, experiencing a letting go and becoming one with the natural world around me. Something deep within me connects with the Something outside of me. In this is my growing awareness of God / the Spirit.

My first poem, composed in June 2005, reflects my new growing awareness of the Spirit:

Saturday Afternoon on Barnicoat Hill

**Lying on soft, dry winter's grass
Like childhood in a hay field.
I abandon my body, mind and spirit
To warm winter sun
And puffs of kitten-breath breeze.**

**Constant faint, chirrup of crickets.
A skylark sings in the grass
And a bellbird calls in nearby forest.
Drone of planes in the distance,
The only sound of Man's existence.**

**Peace, perfect peace of solitude.
I contemplate in stillness,
Sense of time lost as I bathe
In this eternal gift of silence
That only Nature can bestow.**

**Then, an ocean surge of wind
In the pines below. And
"Da-ad!" a young voice calls
Reminding me of passing time
And others coming this way.**

When I started thinking about this topic I realised there is for me an essential element to being aware of the Spirit in the Natural world - solitude. Joyce Rupp

describes solitude as “the empty space we deliberately choose in order to be with the Beloved.” She writes “In solitude we can savour this goodness and give ourselves space to really listen It is when we are alone, uninterrupted, single-minded, and single-hearted, that some of the wonderful inner fruits come to the surface. If we want to learn how to grow spiritually, we will need the discipline of solitude.”

I am grateful I am comfortable with seeking solitude. For me it isn't a discipline so much as a need to which I respond when the time and circumstances draw me. Solitude in the house, with the every day around me doesn't speak to me the way getting into some quiet spot outdoors does. Sitting on my swing-seat in a secluded place in my garden, absorbing the peace and appreciating the moment, fills me with huge gratitude and a sense of Presence. When I feel deeply troubled I know I need to seek some hours or days by myself as close to the natural world as possible to allow my angst-filled mind to be stilled by the calm that is found away from the activity of people.

What is it in the silence which some of us experience when up in the mountains or alone by the beach or a mountain stream? There is “stillness” which allows one to become absorbed into a oneness with Nature, with the present at that place, or I experience as being in the Presence of God. My mind no longer tries to sort out problems; it gradually becomes calm as I simply learn again *to be*. Sometimes I might sit and merely watch what is around me – birds pecking for shellfish in a mudflat or flitting in a tree looking for insects, the wind making patterns on long

tussocks as it passes, clouds floating over the hilltops, seagulls riding the thermals.

Or I might sit with a sketch pad and focus on something specific to capture in pencil or pastels – absorbed in colour and shapes. Gradually, I become aware of a deep sense of the Spirit with me, and deep within I know questions are being answered, disturbances are being removed by the increasing feeling of peace that comes over me. It might take an hour, a day or several days.

In recent times, I have been grateful for the freedom I have in my life to be able to respond to that inner call to seek the peace of the Spirit in solitude amidst the world of nature, not with people. So I take days out for myself to a favourite beach, or plan some days away where I can spend time exploring the outdoors safely on my own.

A contrasting recent experience highlights my need for solitude as an essential element. While planning a long overseas trip with a friend which included some weeks in China and, knowing how busy the trip was going to be, I insisted on including in the itinerary some days in a couple of remote mountain parks. Chinese art is renowned for its misty scenes of mountains, rivers and waterfalls, which would surely invite contemplation and an openness to God. So with considerable manipulation of our travel plans we arranged to visit the National parks of Mt Lushan, and Huangshan Mt. There I had hoped I would find, as Chinese artists, poets, writers and mystics had done over the centuries, the peace and beauty that inspires and nourishes the Soul and mind. I had hoped for opportunities for peaceful

solitude to recharge the spiritual and mental energy which for me gets dissipated in the busyness of travel. But expectations can result in huge disappointments.

What happened for me was almost a nightmare and produced enormous levels of stress. Not peace and quiet and solitude, but thousands of noisy bustling excited Chinese tourists who jammed the steep and narrow paths in their large tour groups led by loud-speaking tour leaders. Yes, we saw the forest-covered peaks and mist-filled valleys which were breathtaking in their steepness and grandeur. And over-nighting in a hotel high up in the mountains so we could see the sunrise was an experience which many Chinese aspire to. But where was the stillness I had come to find? It was not in my surroundings, nor in my head.

Eckhart Tolle teaches that we must learn to experience stillness in any place, by simply *being with the present* moment. The lesson I learned from my Huangshan Mountain experience is I have to discipline my mind to be able to seek and find the Spirit wherever I am and not be ruffled by external disturbances.

What is that *stillness* we can experience in Nature? The trees, rocks, birds, water, waves, sand, shells, etc exist in the present outside the troubled world of human thoughts. They don't emit disturbed and disturbing ripples of fear and angst into the atmosphere as human minds do. Is what we experience in the peace and solitude of their world, the absence of “troubled waters” caused by the destructive thought processes that human minds in our hectic society continuously emit like radio waves? Do we experience a stillness up in the mountains or on a deserted shore because we are out of reach of “the mental and emotional stuff” of human

society which normally vibrates around us invisible but disturbingly present?

My spiritual connection with the Natural world, is helping me to grow in my awareness not only of the Oneness of everything, the invisible connectedness of all thoughts, feelings, relationships and actions, but also a closer communion with the Spirit which guides my life if I learn to be still and listen to it.

BEYOND

There is a seeing deeper than what the eyes can scan

a hearing more profound than what the ears can detect

a taste that goes beyond what can be savored in the mouth

a touching far more sensitive than skin can caress.

The most profound passion
the highest

most exquisite beauty and joy are
experienced in that God-place

beyond sight

beyond hearing

beyond taste

beyond touch

beyond feeling

Barbara Sampson

ME, THE TREE, AND GOD

I walk through the park into the trees
and immediately it starts to happen
the inner shift into stillness
into peace
it happens every time.

Before I got here I didn't even realise
that I was carrying any tension
- felt perfectly content, I thought -
but now I find myself entering
some other realm
a quieter, opener place of the heart.

A piwakawaka flits across my path
it feels like a kind of salutation
sunlight flickers through the leaf canopy
and light patterns play upon the grass
about my feet
everything glows and trembles with life.

And the singing!
Birds, insects, leafy wind-chimes
The song is wonderful!
Gently but insistently, it filters the city
din
until the roar in my head subsides
and all I hear is the birds
my footfalls, and
- what is that other thing?
my heartbeat?
a voice?

"Be still... Be still..."

In this age where most of us
most of the time
surrender our wills to the clock
to traffic lights, to the TV
God still has the sunrise
the trees
the rocks and waves
on the shoreline
the song of wind and birds
and stars
to remind us that life is not the same
thing

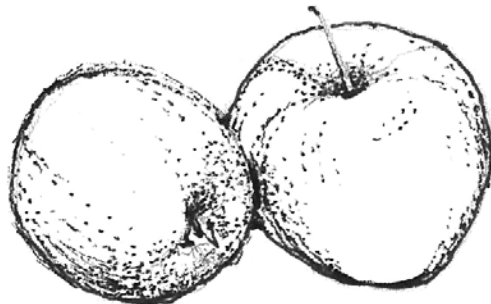
as speed
that hope is more than a career path
that truth is greater than possessions
and that a quiet but enduring care
is at the heart of all things.

In the trees God has a voice saying, "Here
I am."

Once upon a time
God walked in the orchard
in the cool of the evening
with his friends Eve and Adam.

We may still find God there.

Mark Laurent - first published in *Throw
Away The Stones*, 2004



ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINTS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Graeme Finlay

Recently I re-read the story of the Good Samaritan. Our Lord was confronted by the question "Who is my neighbour?" This question reflects the complacent materialism typical of Western Christianity. The questioner probably had in mind the limited circle of acquaintance provided by neighbours, workmates and co-religionists.

But Jesus answered in a way that is profoundly disturbing. My neighbour is *anyone* to whom I can choose to show compassion and kindness. It is our *choice* to act (or not to act) on behalf of others that defines our circle of neighbours. The Good Samaritan had an *inclusive* vision of neighbourliness. The way in which Jesus leads us identifies a community of six billion neighbours.

One area where the immediacy of our global neighbourhood is becoming patently obvious is in the ecological crisis. The human community is devouring the biosphere so voraciously, and generating waste with such careless abandon, that the earth's capacity to support life is becoming progressively compromised.

The most urgent problem is the problem of climate change.¹ Ten billion tonnes of carbon (in the form of carbon dioxide, CO₂) are being dumped into the atmosphere every year. This traps heat and raises temperatures, in turn destabilising climate

and endangering people's well-being. In 2000 the WHO estimated that 150,000 people each year were dying from the effects of global warming.

The vastness of the problem engenders either denial or paralysis. Denial is seen in the all-pervading preoccupation with the trivia and trinkets of our over-indulged society. Paralysis is seen in peoples' feelings of helplessness. People fail (or refuse) to respond because they feel that their infinitesimally small contribution to the CO₂ build-up offers no practical reason why they should modify their wasteful lifestyles. The net result is that the problem of climate change intensifies, with catastrophic consequences.

The ecological footprint.

Rees and Wackernagel developed the concept of the *ecological footprint* to depict human impacts on the biosphere.² This is a measure of the demands that each person's lifestyle places on the life-support systems of the planet. It takes into account the area of productive land that is required to provide the food, clothes and building materials that each person requires, and that is needed to absorb that person's wastes.

The largest item of the ecological footprint is the requirement to assimilate the CO₂ that each person produces. The ecological footprint of the wealthiest nations is about 8-10 hectares per person. Our footprint in New Zealand is about 8 ha. The footprint of people in the poorest nations is about 0.5 ha. This huge disparity should cause Christians to pause and consider whether they are living justly - especially as wealth

1. White R and Spencer N (2007) *Christianity, Sustainability and the Environmental Crisis*. (London: SPCK).

2. Rees WE (2002). An ecological economics perspective on sustainability and prospects for ending poverty. *Population and Environment* 24, 15.

currently flows from the poor to the rich countries.³ But footprint analysis has even more urgent implications for us.

(a) The carrying capacity of the earth averages out at about 2.0 ha per person. This means that we New Zealanders (at 8 ha per person) live at four times the level of consumption that is *in principle* available to everyone. Our current level of consumption *necessarily* must keep our neighbours in poverty. For everyone to enjoy our standard of living we would need the resources of *three more planet earths*.

The carrying capacity of the earth ... is currently lower than the actual average footprint ...

(b) The carrying capacity of the earth (1.9 ha of productive area per person on earth) is currently lower than the actual average footprint (2.3 ha per person).⁴ This means that we are not living on what the earth produces, but on the very structure of the biosphere. We are not living on the interest but on the principal. We are liquidating the earth's natural capital.⁴ If this level of consumption is maintained, the biosphere must collapse - and perhaps by mid-century at current rates of exploitation.⁵ People who claim to believe that the earth belongs to the Lord (Ps.24:1) must face the fact that they are destroying what is not theirs.

Implications of footprint analysis.

In response to this reality, Rees has said that "Modern 'man' must consciously

3. Houghton J (2007). Why care for the environment? (Faraday Paper no.5) www.faraday-institute.org
4. Rees WE (2003). A blot on the land. *Nature* **421**, 898.
5. Kitzze J, Wackernagel M, Loh J et al (2008). Shrink and share: humanity's present and future ecological footprint. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society Series B* **363**, 467.

deconstruct his failing growth-bound materialist world-view, and in its place create a society of material sufficiency in which people find meaning more in relationship and in the development of social capital than in the accumulation of private goods".⁶ Here is a secular scholar telling us that the materialistic programme of *Homo economicus* has failed; the Enlightenment has been a desperate mistake. But the Western Church in its affluent complacency seems almost wholly silent! And many evangelicals (now a much-abused term) in particular seem to labour

under the illusion that the unrestrained growth of material wealth is a sign of God's blessing. On the contrary, footprint analysis demonstrates that accumulated material affluence is a sign that people have refused to share what has been entrusted to their care.

For a biblical perspective, we need to consider the message of Israel's prophets. They reflected on environmental degradation and perceived a spiritual cause.⁷

Woe to those who add house to house and join field to field until everywhere belongs to them and they are the sole inhabitants of the land.

Yahweh Sabaoth has sworn this in my hearing,
'Many houses shall be brought to ruin,
both great and fine,
and left untenanted;
ten acres of vineyard will yield only one barrel,

6. Rees (2002), 44.
7. Isaiah 5:8-10; see also Isa. 24:1-6; Jer 5:22-28.

ten bushels of seed will yield only one bushel'.

The Christian theologian Michael Northcott has said that the prophets linked social injustice with ecological destruction. The prophets perceived "a deep connection within created order between human injustice with regard to the distribution of the wealth of God's creation, especially environmental exclusion of the poor, and ecological degradation."⁸ When people abandoned the worship of Yahweh, they deserted the needy and abused the land.⁹

Not everyone on earth consumes and emits wastes to the same extent; and not all are equally vulnerable to the harmful consequences. We are the worst consumers and emitters. And those who are least guilty of this greed are the most vulnerable. All of this means that the disciple of Jesus is presented with a new imperative. It is incumbent on each of us to

The modern Western appetite for a constant and changing flow of consumer goods represents a spiritual disease.

live *justly*, regardless of whether we can make an appreciable effect on the build-up of greenhouse gases. Regardless of whether a changed pattern of consumption by the individual will make a difference to the CO2 accumulation in the atmosphere, and to the suffering wrought upon us by our abused ecosphere, Christian justice *demand*s that each person who bears the name of Christ lives in such a way as to make space for the poor to improve their lot. Ethical imperatives allow no room for paralysis.

And ecological footprint analysis leads ineluctably to the conclusion that to *live*

8. Gill R, editor (2001). *Cambridge Companion to Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: CUP), 221.
9. Northcott M (2007). *A Moral Climate*. (Maryknoll: Orbis), 12-13.

justly Christians should aim to reduce consumption to 25% of current levels. Only by taking this imperative seriously will the Church demonstrate to a (rightly) sceptical world that we follow One who took the nature of a servant, and that we are members of the eternal city with permanent foundations.

In the light of the facts we are considering, the current practice of injustice/ecological abuse must be seen as idolatry. Northcott has said that "It is precisely the modern devotion to the cult of consumerism which is driving the horrific global scale of environmental destruction. The modern Western appetite for a constant and changing flow of consumer goods represents a spiritual disease, and is indicative that Western civilisation has at its heart a devotion to that which is not God. 'Idolatry' is the word used in the Old Testament to describe the worship of created things in the place of God".¹⁰

At its most basic level, the Western lifestyle is idolatrous, and, in general, the Church of Jesus Christ has not separated itself from the prevailing idol of acquisitiveness. And we presume to judge Israel for its worship of the Baals!

I long for the day when the world will take note of a group of people known for their simple, contented, and generous living. This is a group of people who will have re-discovered community. They will provide a paradigm for an appropriate response to climate change. And it will be recognised that they bear the name of Jesus Christ.

10. Berry RJ, editor (2000). *The Care of Creation*. (Leicester: IVP), 168.

HOGAVE CONSERVATION PROJECT IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA HIGHLANDS

David Kima

Why should we care for the environment and all of God's Creation? Simply, it is because God does. The writer of Psalm 65:9 understood this clearly: *'You care for the land and water it, you enrich it abundantly.'*

God's love of his earth is demonstrated by practical action. He does not neglect what he has made but constantly maintains it. As a consequence it is continually renewed and it produces abundant water, food, shelter and other resources for people and indeed for all creatures. This message is reinforced in Psalm 104.

In Papua New Guinea we easily understand that if God were to neglect the land and the forest and not send the rain when it was needed, everything would dry up and the living things that depend on the rainforest for water, food and shelter would become extinct; people would die of hunger and thirst.

But more than that, we accept that God has given men, women and children a specific mandate to be responsible stewards (Genesis 1:26, 28; 2:15). God wants us to take good care of the environment where he has put us. We must look after the land and the land will in turn supply our physical needs. In Papua New Guinea we know that on the slopes of the mountain and down in the valley there is fertile soil for us to plant crops to feed our families. Once the land has been used for a few years we leave it to regenerate and move to a new location. We are subsistence

farmers, but we often allocate some of the land for planting cash crops that are introduced into the community to generate income for the family. We have learned how to match the different soils to the various crops. God has given us not only the natural resources, but also the knowledge and wisdom to select the right type of soil to plant the right type of crop. Consequently, as we plant and reap the harvest, we are thankful to God for all the different blessings that result in abundant produce. We only clear the ground and plant the seed; it is God who gives the fertile soil and waters it and sends the sun to make the plants grow, and He also gives the skill to manage it well.

But growing food is not the whole story. We know from experience that the forest is useful for cutting wood to build homes and for providing firewood for fuel and wild nuts and fruit and birds and animals to enrich our diet. We also find it refreshing to walk through the forest on a hot day, drinking from its cool waters and admiring the beautiful flora and fauna which God has made.

Not everywhere is blessed with rainforests. We can also appreciate the treeless hills with only grass on them and the lowlands with their own beautiful vegetation and wildlife and warm, humid tropical atmosphere. The coastlands and islands have their own special appeal. God in his wisdom has created all these things for us to enjoy and treat with care. Praise his name! Psalm 104:1: *'Praise the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty.'*

This is one of the main messages that I have been promoting for many years in my role as General Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance of Papua New Guinea. We have published a handbook of principles and



The Black-billed Bird of Paradise

(*Epimachus fastuosus*)

Artist: Richard Bowdler Sharpe. 1847-1909

See www.oiseaux.net/photo/bowdler.sharpe/

In public domain

practice called “Christians Caring for the Environment in Papua New Guinea” which provides biblical and technical foundations for the use of pastors and teachers. The central theme is that if God cares and acts, so should we.

This understanding and commitment has also motivated me to encourage my own extended family to embrace these ideas and to work on conserving their tribal virgin forest. My ancestral home is at Hogave village, south west of Mt. Michael in the Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea.

A few years ago I realised that the environment around Hogave was under serious threat. The population of the area was increasing rapidly resulting in pressure for

people to cut down more and more trees, vines and bushes in order to make new gardens. They did not seem to realise that these activities were gradually but permanently destroying their own habitat. In particular, the creeks which serve as the main drinking water supply were being polluted and depleted and the previously abundant wild life (including the blue crested and long sickle billed birds of paradise) was disappearing.

The people did not seem to know of any alternative strategies. In addition, the potential for both logging and mineral exploration was real, as indicated by the interest of both locals and outsiders, yet there was little awareness of the environmental implications.

It was not easy to convince the people that conservation is important. However, years of concerted awareness raising has resulted in acceptance of a policy of

environmental care. After many formal and informal meetings the people understood the issues and decided to take action. In fact it took more than a decade for them to finally commit themselves to conservation of their forest with its wildlife.

The Hogave Conservation Project was established to manage about 20 square kilometers of the virgin forest and to promote soil conservation and enrichment strategies that reduce the need to encroach on the virgin forest. An eco-guesthouse has been built within this area, especially to encourage training and research. Already the beautiful blue birds of paradise and many other birds that were previously rarely seen on the fringes of the forest can be seen moving around freely, apparently feeling quite safe from human predation.

The total forest area around Mt. Michael is more than 100 square kilometers and it is hoped that the other tribes and clans who have ownership rights to the forest area will join in the efforts to conserve their heritage. Success in this area could then impact other remaining pristine areas in the country as local people note what has happened and are motivated to begin to conserve their own flora and fauna, soils and water sources.

But we always take the opportunity to reinforce the message that the primary motivation for conservation is belief that God cares actively for his creation and therefore so should we.

A few years ago I realised that the environment around Hogave was under serious threat.

CEMETERY WASHED AWAY BY RISING SEA

Francis Gabriel

The National newspaper report

Porebada, a Motuan village just outside Port Moresby, is quietly seeing one of its cemeteries being washed away.

Porebada has recently become one of the many coastal villages in Papua New Guinea facing the brunt of rising sea levels. “Despite the present shoreline being washed away along with the cemetery, nothing has been done to save it,” Karua Walo, a concerned villager, said.

The cemetery was used during the 1960s and 1970s until it was closed in the early 1990s due to the impact of the rising sea level. “Back in the early 1970s, this cemetery was more than 20m from the shoreline. But now, as you can see, the shoreline has gone past the cemetery,” Mr

Walo told The National newspaper at the site.

A visit by The National to Porebada on Saturday showed nothing of a cemetery but a shoreline and dried up seabed scattered with headstones and cement monuments surrounded by washed-up seaweed and algae which once marked the resting place of the dead. The National team with Mr Walo also came across a human bone lying in the open where the waves had left it before the tide receded.

Despite the frightening impact and the rate at which the beachfront is being washed away, Mr Walo said one of the contributing factors was the cutting down of mangroves along the village’s seafront for building purposes and firewood, and the collection of sand to put under houses and backyards. “Now with the rise in population, that means more houses are built and more sand and mangroves are collected and harvested,” Mr Walo said.

Is there anyplace I can go to avoid your Spirit?
to be out of your sight?

If I climb to the sky, you’re there!

If I go underground, you’re there!

If I flew on morning’s wings

to the far western horizon,

You’d find me in a minute -

you’re already there waiting!

Then I said to myself,

“On, he even sees me in the dark!

At night I’m immersed in the light!”

It’s a fact: darkness isn’t dark to you;

night and day, darkness and light,

they’re all the same to you.

Psalm 139: 7-12 *The Message*

CHRISTIAN ECOSPIRITUALITY

Mary C. Grey

Christian ecospirituality has a *mystical* dimension, fostering awe, wonder and reverence in creation and God's presence within it. Part of this is also learning *from* nature (see Ps. 104 or Job 12.7-9, for example), and rediscovering those dimensions of Jewish and Christian Scriptures that encourage this. Both Scripture, poetry and art sustain this mystical dimension: poets have been faithful to the earth at times when theologians have transferred their attention to beyond it. At the same time it is *prophetic* in its denunciation of lifestyles of excess and exploitation, and visionary in its call to simplicity in the light of the messianic dream of the 'peaceable kingdom' where human beings, animals and all creation live in harmony (see Isa. 11). Both mystical and prophetic dimensions seek liturgical expression. Praise and thanksgiving are constant elements in worship, but particularly powerful is the recovery of prophetic lament, where sorrow and grief for what has been destroyed and lost are given liturgical space. The sacramental tradition that reverences the natural world as gift and as radiating the presence of God (a

constant valued tradition in the liturgy of the Orthodox Church), now takes on new significance when the continued existence of this world is threatened. At the same time the prophetic aspect inspires new ethics, calling for lifestyles of living more respectfully with the earth and organizing active protest about such issues as compassionate methods in farming, the manipulation of nature through GM crops, and the need to halt desertification in many parts of the world.

Such spirituality seeks to ground major themes in theology. Redemption and salvation include the wellbeing and flourishing of all earth's ecosystems. The cross of Christ is planted anew in places of suffering where the earth's very survival is in question. Eschatology, the hope of eternal life and heaven, are in some way dependent on the earth's inclusion in resurrection and the risen life. But if there is one fruit of ecospirituality to be emphasized it is of 'joy'. Living in right relation with the earth and all creation is a joyful experience, a foretaste of the fullness of the new creation and the coming of the peaceable kingdom.

From *Ecological Spirituality* in The New SCM Dictionary Of Christian Spirituality. Ed. by Philip Shelldrake. SCM Press. 2005. Page 262. Used with permission.

Gardening is contact with God and the life force that sustains the world and sustains us!

Sr Loyola Galvin. 22.10.2008.
NZ Gardener of the Year

God, brilliant Lord,
yours is a household name.

Nursing infants gurgle choruses about
you;
toddlers shout the songs
That drown out enemy talk,
and silence atheist babble.

I look up at your macro-skies,
dark and enormous,
your handmade sky-jewelry,
Moon and stars mounted in their
settings.

Then I look at my micro-self and wonder,
Why do you bother with us?
Why take a second look our way?

Yet we've so narrowly missed being
gods,
bright with Eden's dawn light.
You put us in charge of your handcrafted
world,
repeated to us your Genesis-charge,
Made us lords of sheep and cattle,
even animals out in the wild,
Birds flying and fish swimming,
whales singing in the ocean deeps.

God, brilliant Lord,
your name echoes around the world.

Psalm 8. *The Message*

I have ... a terrible need ...
shall I say the word? ... of
religion. Then I go out at
night and paint the stars.

Vincent van Gogh

SPIRITUAL VALUES FOR EARTH LIVING TODAY

Have you ever thought about the spiritual realities, truths and values that the Christian community can bring to earth living today? And what might your own particular contributions from your faith, theology and spirituality be?

David Hallman¹ suggests the following:

Gratitude - 1 Thessalonians. 5:16-18

Humility - Luke 9:46-48

Sufficiency - Luke 12:15; 9:25

Justice - Isaiah 58:6

Love - John 15:12-14

Peace - John 14:27

Faith and Hope - Hebrews 11:1

Which of these strike a chord with you, and why?

What other spiritual values can you add to these, and what will their significance be?

How can you offer these to the community around you?

¹ Spiritual Values For Earth Community. Chapt. 3. Risk - WCC Pub., Geneva. 2000.

THE JOURNEY

Barrie Herrold

I shall be telling this with a sigh
We have come to the end of the road
All of the mountains we struggled to climb
Can see us faintly from a distant place
Our vision is no longer shadowed
By great endless ranges
I think I will miss fighting
Climbing endlessly only to stand
Finally atop the highest peak, exhausted
Filled with awe at the sight
Of cliffs and valleys
Surrounded by
Thick clouds
Swallowing up
The beaten trail behind us
I don't know what awaits now
We shall set sail on the open sea
To find a new light to follow

HUMOUR

Andrew Dunn

On a recent retreat we were looking into the humour of Jesus. Along with the *Laughing Jesus* picture we found numerous examples of his humour in the Gospels.

We can't help smiling at the image of a camel trying to get through the eye of a needle, even if it is a very small gate in Jerusalem's wall. The thought of swallowing a camel while sifting out an insect catches us as well. How about trying to take a speck out of someone's eye while we have a log in our own? (Luke 6:41-42). Wasn't there a twinkle in Jesus' eye as he said things like that, a smile on his face?

At the centre of his humour Jesus uses hyperbole, an exaggeration for effect, as in the speck/log incident. He pricked

the bubbles of people's pride and self-righteousness, even their sense of importance and power. He also used things that don't naturally fit together, even ridiculous images, to catch listeners' attention, as in his "blind guides" attempting to lead people and ending up in a ditch (e.g. Matt. 15:14). He had a thing about political correctness whether of the status quo in society or religiosity. He poked fun at people who couldn't laugh at themselves.

This then led us on to wondering if, as the one by whom all things were created and hold together (St Paul's mystical vision of Christ in Colossian 1:15-17), we could see examples of humour in his creation! It wasn't long before various examples came to light.

Have you ever seen pukeko chicks trying to walk through longish grass? Or the fern vine in the bush sending out its tendril seeking somewhere to latch on to? It waves around, this way and that, as if on something stronger than water, often with the aid of a breeze until it touches a twig or plant and wraps itself around it and goes on to find another. Or tuis mimicking odd sounds, like the miaow of a cat in our garden recently! It's still doing it as I write some weeks later. How about kereru, native pigeons, doing wing-overs and looping the loop just for the fun of it?

We have a tiny greenhood orchid growing in our bush (*pterostylis agathicola*), and it only grows on the compost mounds and nearby soil around kauri trees! The kauri can be huge and erect and there around the base are these delicate orchids. To add to the wonder and delight is the fact that the orchids have a symbiotic relationship with the fungi in kauri compost - they need the kauri detritus and it needs the orchids to feed it.

Yes, creation opens up all sorts of chuckles, surprises, delights and "Wow, look at that" moments. Recent BBC Wildlife series added many fresh delights on a wider scale - colour, incongruity, unique and surprising animals, birds, aquatic life, and reptiles.

See what you can find in creation that delights you. Laughter and lightness of spirit are delightful companions indeed, not least in the depths of silence or the burdens of life.

A ROCHA

Demonstrating God's love for the earth

Kristel van Houte-Howes

The name "*A Rocha*" is the Portuguese word for '*The Rock*'. The first *A Rocha* project was established by two British missionaries working in Portugal who wanted to create a place where people involved in practical conservation projects, scientific research and environmental education can experience God's love for all He has made, by living and working alongside people who are passionate about God and His creation. *A Rocha* projects have a community emphasis, bringing together people from widely differing backgrounds to work together towards common goals.

A Rocha NZ seeks to reach out to both the church and un-churched in their mission to care for the World that God made. *A Rocha NZ* recognises there is a biblical mandate for Christians to participate in Creation care, but that at present conservation is not seen as a priority within Christian mission by the NZ church, even

though New Zealanders in general are environmentally aware and have a sense of being connected to the world and care of creation.

A Rocha did not begin out of a conviction that there was a need for more conservation projects. Rather it began with two missionaries who were passionate about creating bridges between the church and a society filled with people who felt that the church is either not relevant to the world they care about, or else is incomprehensible or impenetrable. *A Rocha* projects have a mission - reaching out to the non-Christian world by creating a place where non-Christians can work within a Christian organisation - discovering a God who actually cares about what they care about too, and getting to know Him better through exploring more of the extraordinary world He made.

There is also a mission to the church - to wake it up from its apathy towards the non-human world. To draw together Christians who feel that the created world is an essential element in their relationship with God and to encourage the church to live out the church's call to care for creation. *A Rocha* recognises that many Christians in NZ are already concerned about environmental issues. *A Rocha* wants to minister to those people also, and give them a place they can turn to if they want to act on their concerns. Many New Zealand Christians are involved in secular conservation initiatives but not many of those organisations recognise God as the creator. *A Rocha* provides a central base where God's people can share their passion for the natural world. A place that recognises we are all participating in God's work to care for creation and also worship the creator, something that is always at the centre of every *A Rocha* project.

Now Christians concerned about God's creation have a united voice in New Zealand with the launch of *A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand* (ARANZ). ARANZ held its founding conference over Queen's Birthday Weekend 2008 (May 30th-June 2nd) at Raglan, aiming to inspire and empower Christians to ecological action. The conference was attended by about 100 people from around the country, plus two Australians and a delegate from Papua New Guinea.

Peter Harris, and *A Rocha* CEO, Marie Connett Porceddu (based in France), were keynote speakers at the Raglan conference. Both emphasised the 'family' character of the *A Rocha* movement and its considerable national and local diversity.

At the conference, Anglican Archbishop David Moxon highlighted prominent Christian people and communities

through the 2000 years of church history who had been leaders in caring for creation. Dr Anthony Cole and students from the Maori ministry school Taapapa gave an indigenous perspective linking environmental damage and cultural decline in Aotearoa. Writer David Young described some of the pioneers of conservation in New Zealand, and Department of Conservation Waikato Regional Conservator, Greg Martin, outlined the huge conservation challenges that NZ is facing today.

Each afternoon practical workshops were held - tree planting, nature walks, harbour care, recycling, photography, contemplation and teaching creation-care to children.

Local *A Rocha* Groups are now being established. See www.arocha.org and the New Zealand section for details.



CREATION - Jo O'Hara

PAINTING THE SKY

I love the way You paint the sky.
The sunrise colours splashed across
the grey strata:
fiery reds heating up the clouds,
burnt oranges fading to pale yellows
flaming to a blazing disk
piercing the eyes.
The subtle pastels of a cloudless dusk:
mauve, pink, apricot banding the
horizon,
rising stronger, before fading back to old
age.
And the paint brush of just white
on a blue canvas;
wistful strands from a solitary bristle trail
behind
a single light brush stroke.
Or a living pattern flicked on high
changing form in the wind currents,
sparking my imagination with animals,
objects, even Your face, peering through,
smiling at the ones You love so much.

I love the way You paint the sky
with greys a hundred strong,
a beauty present
when we look beyond the promised wet.
The groaning sky, never uniform,
You arrange with ripples of light:
patches of ivory amid numerous gravely
tones
hinting at clear heights that reign above,
bringing hope to a storm savaged
country-side.
Then varieties of ash shades bunch up
in ruffles
as if You are sweeping the skies
with a wide broom,
sending all the rain laden fluff
into the corner dustbin.
Or with a flash of brilliance
You choose to bright the horizon
from left to right with a sheet of light
or fork the atmosphere with a zigzag
searching for the ground.

Twisting Your brush You
leave twirls with smokey ends trailing.
And sometimes it appears that You
forget to paint at all,
the easel remaining empty of all but blue.
Until I realise Your brush
has taken different cold hues
and swept across the sky,
a canopy of ultramarine fading,
in a horizontal rainbow warming the
vault.

Then at night You delight the vision
with winking prongs of gold
shimmering tentatively, ever returning,
or hiding, silhouetted behind misty wisps
of street halogen reflecting cloud;
or haloing a full moon with
its own re-reflected light.
The velveteen black blanket that
caresses the atmosphere
obscures all but the haunting
image of a distant universe.
Night's darkness or day's light
Your Divine artistry inspirits my soul.

Jo Anastasiadis

OBITUARY

We acknowledge that our generation witnesses the next great wave of extinction of species of which we are part. The last wave saw the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. This era of massive biodiversity thinning and loss is happening around us as we focus on economic growth, sporting supremacy and first world lifestyles. We note with sorrow the passing of kith and kin around the world - on land, in the sea and in the air.

Extinction is forever!

*For God loved the cosmos so much that he gave
his only Son ...
John 3:16*

BOOK REVIEWS

Planetwise: Dare to Care for God's World

Dave Bookless. 2008 InterVarsity Press.

ISBN 978-1-84474-251-6

Reviewed by Ingrid Shepherd

"Many people say climate change is the biggest threat our world faces today. I beg to differ." says Dave Bookless in the opening paragraph of his new book, *Planetwise: Dare to Care for God's World*.

Bookless (National Director of A Rocha in the UK) goes on to explain: "Climate change is simply the most obvious symptom of a much, much deeper sickness ... as human beings we have got our relationship with the planet all wrong". Although there are now thousands of books testifying to this fact from a scientific perspective, this is one of only a handful of books written for a lay audience that explores the biblical understanding of human beings' relationship with the rest of creation.

Bookless states that in his experience, most of the time most Christians are glad if someone cares for the earth... "just as long as it doesn't have to be me!" However, he proposes that, instead, caring for the earth is *integral* to Christian faith: "Concern for the whole of God's creation is fundamental to the God of the Bible and to his purposes for human beings".

He supports this thesis by a careful unpacking of 'five acts' in the Biblical story: Creation (God, humanity and creation), the Fall ('creation's groaning'), Israel (and land... the most overlooked theme in the Bible?), Jesus (and creation), and the Present and Future Age (the 'new creation'). This is followed with four 'Living it out' chapters, on discipleship, worship, lifestyle and mission. At the conclusion of each chapter, there are three questions for further contemplation or

discussion, and appendices respond to eleven hot potato FAQs (relating to Christianity, the Bible, creation and environmental care) and provide a list of useful resources.

Straightforward, easy-to-read, but with theological depth, this is 'highly recommended' reading.

Spiritual Direction - a practical introduction

By Sue Pickering

Canterbury Press, Norwich. 2008. pp221.

Approx. \$40.00. Available from Church

Stores, Auckland.

Reviewed by Andrew Dunn.

This fresh and extensive presentation of spiritual direction is the first to be written in New Zealand. It comes out of Sue Pickering's work as a spiritual director, as Co-ordinator of Spiritual Growth Ministries Spiritual Directors' Formation Programme, her wide knowledge of current literature and from her pastoral interests. The aim to introduce Christian leaders to contemplative spiritual direction is done attractively and winsomely. By "contemplative spiritual direction" she means working with people's actual experiences of God and grace.

The first 40 pages, exploring the question "What is Spiritual Direction?", move through clearly presented material on the historical and Biblical roots of this ministry, contemporary models of it and what it looks like in practice. Her comments on what makes a good spiritual director are timely and encouraging.

Then follow chapters on listening and responding to God, to ourselves and to others which I haven't seen presented elsewhere in such clarity, sensitivity and detail. Listening to disappointment or anger with God, to pain and abuse, faith crises, grief, issues around sexuality, transference and the perceived absence of God (among others) are apt and practical.

The final chapter on spiritual direction in parish, chaplaincy and community contexts uses material gleaned from New Zealand writings, stories and practical experience, and extends the vision of direction into the heart of pastoral and community engagement. Sue includes summaries and questions for personal reflection in each section, sources of further reading, ample footnotes and an extensive bibliography.

As Archbishop David Moxon says in his Foreword, "Sue's book offers us a careful and finely tuned manual for the art of spiritual direction. There is such a thirst for this art now that this book deserves to be widely used and widely shared, and we will all be blessed and encouraged in our pilgrimage."

For those for whom this is their ministry there is much to stretch, encourage and strengthen. For those seeking to deepen pastoral ministry there is much to inspire and encourage. Thank you Sue.

Candlelight: Illuminating the Art of Spiritual Direction

Susan S. Phillips Harrisburg, PA:

Morehouse, 2008

A Spiritual Directors International Book

Reviewed by Lynne M. Baab

I've often wished I could be an invisible listener when other people are receiving spiritual direction. I'd love to hear the kinds of issues people talk about and the way the spiritual director draws out those issues and brings them into Christ's light. Susan Phillip's new book on spiritual direction, *Candlelight*, gives that fly-on-the-wall perspective.

Dr Phillips, a sociologist and spiritual director who teaches at several theological seminaries in California, USA, recounts the narrative of spiritual direction sessions with nine individuals. The people featured in her book come from a wide diversity of backgrounds.

In each case, Dr Phillips presents some of the actual dialogue, which illustrates the way she listens and the suggestions she makes. In some instances, she gives a brief biblical or theological background to the issues that are discussed.

She has arranged the book around three stages of spiritual direction, which she calls beginning, journeying, and fruition. For each person, she gives the reader an intimate glimpse of what direction looks like at each of the three stages. She describes some common issues and patterns of the three stages she has identified. The opening section of the book, which gives an overview of spiritual direction, is also very helpful.

Anyone who participates in spiritual direction or who wants to, as either a director or directee, would benefit from *Candlelight*. In addition, people who engage in any form of pastoral ministry will find a wonderful model here for how to listen carefully and help people bring the issues of their lives into God's presence. Because of Dr Phillip's examples, I found myself challenged to bring better listening skills into all my conversations, and I greatly valued seeing the various specific ways she encouraged people listen to God for themselves.

Fasting: Spiritual Freedom Beyond Our Appetites

by Lynne M. Baab (IVP Books 2006)

Reviewed by Sheila Pritchard

"Fasting is ...simple. We remove something habitual so that we can experience something new." So says Baab in the introductory chapter of this excellent little book.

We generally associate fasting with going without food. And certainly this book covers that area very fully and helpfully. But particularly thought provoking is the way the author covers other kinds of fasts. Baab succinctly makes the point that "fasting

addresses our addiction to consumption” – consumption of all kinds. Advertising constantly seeks to assure us that we need more of this or that and “deserve” a better, bigger something else! Baab says: “This obsessive tug of war between self-indulgence and discipline is the exact opposite of the freedom Jesus desires for us.”

The subtitle: “Spiritual Freedom Beyond our Appetites” is key to the way this author approaches fasting. She makes clear that fasting is a way to free ourselves *from* things that may seem quite innocent but reveal themselves as having an addictive hold. This freedom allows time, space and focus *for* a deeper relationship with God. Fasting is not a punitive discipline nor a badge of honour. It allows more time for prayer but it is not a way to manipulate God into doing what we want. Nor is it to be used as “a spiritualized reason to justify eating disorders.” (The topic of eating disorders and fasting is very wisely discussed.)

This 150 page book covers excellent practical information about different kinds of full or partial fasts from food as well as specific examples of fasting from media, shopping, reading ... and whatever else hinders our freedom. The author covers Biblical material about fasting, some historical material and many contemporary examples from people who have shared their fasting stories. Each chapter has questions for reflection, discussion or journaling and a specific prayer focus.

I found the book informative and challenging. I recommend it to broaden the horizons of those who already fast and especially to encourage those (like me) for whom fasting has never been a regular spiritual practice.

Lynne Baab, originally from USA, currently lives in Dunedin and is lecturer in Pastoral Theology at the University of Otago.

The Wisdom of Wilderness: Experiencing the Healing Power of Nature

Gerald G. May
Harper San Francisco 194 pp. 2006
Reviewed by Jo Anastasiadis

Gerald May has authored a number of books that have blended spirituality and psychology, but *The Wisdom of Wilderness*, his last before his death, is about his own personal encounter with the “Power of the Slowing” as he follows an inner call to spend time with God in the wilderness. Different chapters speak of the wisdom encountered on different occasions through very different experiences: night fear, cicada song, of time and seasons, violence at Smith’s Inlet, a perfection of trees, and rainstorms, among others.

I took this book on retreat with me and found my soul instantly connecting with much of the imagery and some of the sense of Presence May describes as the “Power of the Slowing.” It took me back to some of my own experiences and drew me forward toward wanting to be more attentive to God in the world around me, to listen once again. For *May Wilderness* “is not only the nature you find outdoors. It can also refer to your own true Nature – the You that is closest to your birth.” Some of his insights were cause for welcome reflection, some sat more outside my comfort zone, but always there was the invitation to ask myself, “How am I listening to, what am I hearing from God around and within me?”

May describes his listening to nature bringing him into the Present Moment. A growing, lived experience of contemplation as an openness and

complete presence to whatever is going on in the immediate moment. He acknowledges that his connection to a sense of “just being” is a grace, a gift, not something he could manufacture or control. He gives many examples from his own experience of Wisdom teaching him from the wilderness. And, over his years of being willing to listen, May concludes that “we can never begin to heal the damage we have done to the earth until our own souls find a way back to being who they are as part of the Nature we so care for. And that it is Nature Herself who must heal our wound and turn us toward wholeness.”

“I do not know the cause, but I do know that the fracture between us and nature is still unhealed. It is such an ancient thing that we have become accustomed to the pain of it. And I am convinced that before we can effectively act to heal the wounds we have inflicted upon the earth, we must somehow recover our own natural wholeness. I am further convinced that we cannot do this healing for ourselves; if we could, we would have done so long ago. Only the grace of Something or Someone beyond us can bring us the healing. In my case, the healing came through Nature itself.”

This book is a very easy read, marked by May’s personal openness and honesty about this particular part of his journey. I could see those wanting to expand their own understanding of other people’s journeys with God, and those who themselves want to connect with God through nature and deepen their journey in contemplation, both finding great value in this book. I highly recommend it.

FILM REVIEW

Earth

Directed by Alastair Fothergill
& Mark Linfield

Produced by the BBC Natural
History Unit.

A review by Warren Deason

Those of us who were around for the early days of New Zealand television may remember programmes from the BBC Natural History Unit. The most memorable aspect of these documentaries, besides their absorbing content, was the voice of David Attenborough. His hushed, reverent yet sometimes excitable voice-overs were the subject of many parodies. Some of Attenborough’s most recent work for the unit was in a series produced in 2005 entitled *Planet Earth*, an 11 part series which was described by its makers as, “a definitive look at the diversity of our planet”.

In 2007, a film based on this series was released with the title, *Earth*. In some ways it’s in the film genre of a “road movie”, for over the course of a year and the changing seasons, it focuses on three species: the polar bear, the African elephant and the humpback whale as they travel immense distances in search of food. In particular, it looks at environmental changes that have made such quests more difficult and indeed now threaten the survival of these very species. The rise in temperature threatens the food supply of the bear, the disruption of traditional weather patterns makes the search for water ever more perilous for the elephant and the warming waters endanger the food supply of the humpback whale.

We have come to expect a high standard of work from the BBC Natural History Unit who was a joint producer of this film and we are not disappointed. The visuals are absolutely stunning in every way. The film was made in high definition 35mm

and the quality is evident. Patrick Stewart does the voice-overs and the commentary is enlightening yet not overblown.

As I sat in the theatre I felt that somehow I was being romanced – being opened up to the beauty and wonder of our home planet – it's as though I was falling in love again with this wonderful place we have called "Earth". But I was also faced with the fragility of our ecosystem and maybe I should leave the last word to David Attenborough and maybe here we do need to attend to his reverence, for he is describing sacred things:

"Our planet is still full of wonders. As we explore them, so we gain not only understanding, but power. It's not just the future of the whale that today lies in our hands: it's the survival of the natural world in all parts of the living planet. We can now destroy or we can cherish. The choice is ours."

SGM NEWS

Andrew Pritchard

Ecclesiastes Chapter 3 begins with 'There is a time for everything, a season for every activity' and concludes with 'there is nothing better than to enjoy your work ... for who knows what will happen after them?'

One of SGM's most diligent and faithful workers, Sue Pickering, has decided that it is time (at the end of July 2009) to relinquish her role as Coordinator of the Spiritual Directors' Formation Programme and to commit herself to other ministry roles. Over the last seven years Sue has built most effectively on the foundation laid by Sr Mary Concannon, the first Coordinator of the Programme.

With some 350 people having participated in the Formation Programme since its inception and with an intake in the mid-20s due to commence in 2009 it is effective in meeting an on-going need. During her time as Coordinator Sue has also authored two books: *Creative Ideas for Quiet Days* is soon to be released in a second edition and *Spiritual Direction: A Practical Introduction* has just been published by Canterbury Press. We have been fortunate indeed to have had such input and leadership in the Programme over these last seven years. We are delighted that while Sue relinquishes this particular role she does not cease her contribution to SGM. Sue will continue to be a member of SGM Workgroup for which we are most grateful.

I know, that for the most part, Sue has enjoyed her work in this role. Sue, thank-you! ... and may you continue enjoying the work that you give yourself to in the coming years.

... who knows what will happen next! Well, writers throughout history have noted that change brings opportunity and that loss, properly embraced, leads to growth. This we believe! While we do not know all the specifics of what comes next, we do see some of the pieces:

- we are calling for expressions of interest from people who feel that they have qualifications and experience that may suit them for being the next Coordinator of the Formation Programme. Given Sue's involvement until the end of July we are hoping to make an appointment so that the transition will be as smooth as possible.
- enhancements to the Formation Programme in 2009 see a focus on better managing Participants' introduction into the Programme, particularly to their giving of Spiritual

Direction and extend the focus in year two to equipping people to use what they have gained not only in formal spiritual direction settings but in wider/informal contexts such as pastoral care, chaplaincy contexts, spiritual formation groups and in the workplace etc.

In this edition of 'News' I have focused a lot on the Formation Programme because of the significance of these changes, but there is of course other news too.

Over the last several years SGM has had a stand in the Missions Tent at Parachute Festival and this has enabled us to promote the work effectively with significant conversations had and contacts made. However Workgroup decided that it was time to look for other possibilities in the years ahead. David Crawley and Jane Wilkinson have done a great job organising this and leading a wonderful group of volunteers in mounting this Parachute stand over these years – thank-you to all involved.

At the time of writing I have also been proofing the 2009 Programme. The news here is of continuing interest, commitment and creativity ... there are wonderful individuals and groups of people throughout the country who represent and support the work of SGM. Feedback from people attending events, visiting the SGM Website and reading Refresh show that there is a continued hunger and thirst for opportunities to engage deeply with God and issues of spirit and that SGM continues to be a significant resource for that. To all who contribute to that, area representatives, event leaders and organisers, writers, pray-ers, givers and attenders – thank-you!

Expressions of Interest: Coordinator SGM Spiritual Directors Formation Programme

The position:

- is part-time, currently approximately 20 hours a week
- requires travel within New Zealand (3-7 days per month, depending on where coordinator lives, over 8-9 months of the year)
- is remunerated at a rate linked, pro-rata, to a basic clergy stipend, with allowances and reimbursement of expenses

The person sought will be:

- an experienced spiritual director, preferably a member of ACSD or similar body
- with skills and experience in
 - o adult education
 - o pastoral care or counselling
 - o organization, planning and administration
- self-motivated and disciplined but also able to work collaboratively as part of a team

Written expressions of interest, supported by a brief CV (2 page maximum) are sought, by 20 January 2009.

Please forward to:
Andrew Pritchard
Convener
SGM Workgroup
2/260 State Highway 1
Raumati South
Paraparaumu 5032

or by email
alp_resources@paradise.net.nz

RESOURCES

BOOKS

Real, Urgent, and Personal. a Christian Approach to Global Climate Change. Interchurch Bioethics Council January 2008. This study can be downloaded (free) in PDF form from www.justice.anglican.nz/icbc

F. Lynne Bachleda. **Cantilces of the Earth.** Celebrating the Presence of God in Nature. Loyola Press. 2004. pp 206. A collection of quotes on creation, presence and faith.

Ian Bradley. **God is Green.** Christianity and the Environment. DLT. 1990. pp 118.

Judy Cannato. **Radical Amazement.** Contemplative lessons from black holes, supernovas, and other wonders of the Universe. Sorin Books. 2006. pp 158.

Edward Echlin. **The Cosmic Circle - Jesus and Ecology** The Columban Press. 2004 pp 160. A stimulating presentation of Jesus' upbringing in rural Nazareth, his ministry and teaching so full of earth-based images and implications, his death and resurrection, and the stimulation for contemplative living and action today. Excellent stuff!

Denis Edwards. **Ecology At The Heart Of Faith.** The change of heart that leads to a new way of living on earth. Orbis Books. 2006. pp 146.

Bob Eyles. **The Greening of Christianity.** Ephesus Series No. 6. Christian Research Association of New Zealand. pp 32.

David G. Hallman. **Spiritual Values for Earth Community.** Risk Book Series. WCC Publication, Geneva. 2000. pp134.
Peter Harris. **Kingfisher's Fire.** The A Rocha story of hope for God's earth. Monarch Books 2008. pp 221.

David Kima (editor). **Christians Caring for the Environment in Papua New Guinea.** A Handbook of Principles and Practice. Pub. Evangelical Alliance of PNG. 2005.

Mark Laurent. **Throw Away The Stones.** Pub. by Mark. See www.kiwilink.co.nz/hippies ISBN 0-476-01221-X. 2004 pp58

Clare Lind. **The Long View.** Reflections and meditations for the spiritual journey. Clare has based this book of text, meditations, photos and sketches on her explorations and experiences around the Miramar Peninsula, Wellington, NZ. 20pp. \$20.00. Available from Clare Lind at clare.lind@xtra.co.nz

Constant J. Mews & Kate Rigby. **Ecology, Gender and the Sacred.** Centre for Studies in Religion and Theology, Monash Univesity. Melbourne. 1999. pp138.

Sojourners Study Guide: **Is God Green?** Christians and the environment - a 4 part study guide for small groups. US\$9.95 from www.sojourners.com

Sue Pickering. **Spiritual Direction.** A Practical Introduction. Canterbury Press 2008. pp221, Available in NZ from Church Stores. \$40.00 approx. An excellent NZ written manual on the arts of spiritual direction including as a pastoral tool.

Adrienne Puckey & Sean Millar. **Turnaround Time.** Climate Change & Peak Oil for New Zealanders. 2008. Published by, and available from, Sean Millar, 18 Lloyd Ave, Mt Albert. Auckland 1025. NZ 40 pp. \$8.00 includes postage. Also available as a PDF file from www.justice.org.nz for free.

Gareth Renowden. **Hot topic. Global warming and the future of New Zealand.** AUT Media 2007. pp 203. \$25.00. An excellent current book which also contains an appendix a section on The Sceptical View which addresses each of the climate change sceptics' arguments.

Neil Vaney. **Christ in a Grain of Sand.** An Ecological Journey with the Spiritual Exercises. Ave Maria Press. 2004. pp 192. A personal and ecological retreat of 30 days with a teacher of the Ignatian Exercises rooted in the world, the earth and creation as a whole. Quite unique.

FILMS

Earth. BBC production. See Film Review above.

An Inconvenient Truth. Al Gore's documentary on climate change.

Indescribable. Exploration Films, 2008. Three DVD's on the wonders of creation from a Creationist viewpoint. 180 Minutes. Available in some Christian Bookshops and on the Web.

JOURNALS

SPANZ *September 2008 Issue 36. The Sustainable Church.*

Weavings
Volume XXIII, No. 5. September/October 2008. Stewards of Creation.

New Zealand Geographic
Climate Change issue. Number 93. Sept-Oct. 2008.

CD'S

Natural Heritage - New Zealand Native sounds
Pub.#KCD374 KMP Music.
Recorded on location by Ana & Norval Williamson

New Zealand Natural Landscapes
Paradise New Zealand. 75 tracks of the sounds of natural landscape, fauna and weather.

WEBSITES

The Social Justice Commission of the Anglican Church.
www.justice.anglican.org.nz

Interchurch Bioethics Council Resources
www.presbyterian.org.nz/4599.0.html#c16598
Has Kevin Tate's excellent article and study guide: *Real Urgent and Personal: A Christian approach to global climate change*

Climate Defence Network NZ.
www.climatedefense.org.nz

A Rocha. www.arocha.org

Sustainable Living Centre.
www.ecomatters.org.nz/05_SLC/050_SLC.htm

Hot Topic. A companion website to G. Renowden's book.
www.hot-topic.co.nz/

Ministry for Environment.
www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/climate/

United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC):
www.ipcc.ch/

NZ Government Climate Change Site:
www.climatechange.govt.nz/

CarboNZero:
www.carbonzero.co.nz/

Love Earth.
Endangered animals and the environment.
www.Loveearth.com/uk

Mass Extinction website.
www.well.com/user/davidu/extinction.html

CONTRIBUTORS

Jo Anastasiadis is a beloved daughter of God, wife, mother and spiritual director living in Wellington.

Lynne Baab teaches pastoral theology at Otago University and Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership. Her website is www.lynnebaab.com

Keith Carley is a retired Lecturer in Hebrew Bible Studies and lives at Raumati Beach.

Jocelyn Dale is a parent and spiritual director living in Hamilton with her husband and family. A retired statistician, her favourite hobbies are watercolour painting and enjoying Te Reo Maori.

Warren Deason is pastor of Albany Presbyterian Church.

Eric Dodd is a retired senior oil refinery executive and currently the convener of social issues for Churches Together in Northland.

Craig Drown lives and works in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Andrew Dunn lives and works at Oasis Retreat and Study Centre, Albany.

Graeme Finlay teaches scientific pathology at the University of Auckland

Ray Galvin is a minister of the PCANZ currently living in Cambridge, England and doing doctoral studies on climate change policy.

Peter Harris is founder and President of A Rocha and lives at Les Tourades, the A Rocha headquarters in Provence, France.

Barrie Herrold is a writer, poet, actor and coffee maker living in Auckland.

Nicola Hoggard-Creegan lectures in theology at Laidlaw College, Henderson. She is interested in ecotheology, and writes on issues at the interface between theology and science.

Kristel van Houte-Howes is National Director of A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand and lives in Raglan.

David Kima is General Secretary of the PNG Evangelical Alliance and led the team that produced *Christian Caring for the Environment in PNG*. David is a graduate of the University of PNG and lives in Goroka, Eastern Highland Province.

Mark Laurent is a musician, writer, and itinerant Christian Communicator, living on the Coromandel Peninsula, New Zealand. See www.kiwilink.co.nz/~hippies for his CDs & poetry.

Clare Lind is minister of Miramar Uniting Church, Wellington and has recently completed her training in spiritual direction.

Andrew Prichard is Convenor of SGM's Workgroup.

Sheila Pritchard enjoys a self-employed lifestyle offering spiritual direction, supervision and retreats, with seminars and some teaching, and enjoys walking the North Shore beaches.

Barbara Sampson is a Salvation Army officer now living in Christchurch. She has a pastoral role with Salvation Army officers throughout New Zealand. She is a spiritual director and enjoys working with words.

Andrew Shepherd teaches in various organisations and is completing a PhD in theology at Otago University. He 'makes home' at Makarora, Western Otago.

Ingrid Shepherd is part of the national team of A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand. She lives in Makarora with her husband and two young daughters and enjoys tramping.

Grace Sutherland attends the Nelson Quaker Meeting, and finds joy and peace in her garden, and exploring the natural beauty of our bush, beaches and hills.