



DYNAMIC

Steward

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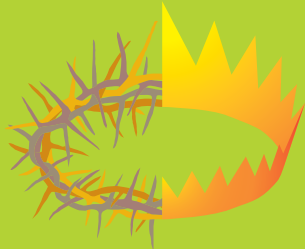
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Exploring partnership with God

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inside ds

Masterfully written, passionate and regarded as one of the finest literary texts included in Scripture is the book of Job. With its opening words, “there was once a man in the land of Uz...” The reader’s attention is captured and drawn to scenes of a heavenly council in the distant cosmos to the tragic death of children and the devastating loss of home and wealth of a man living on planet earth. His friends, complaints of his condition, lead to the breath taking moment of supernatural manifestation and divine encounter in chapter thirty-eight as the LORD speaks to Job “out of the whirlwind.” The epiphany elicits suspense and fearful awe as the LORD cross-examines Job with questions dealing with creation and the ordering of the universe:



“Gird up your loins like a man, I will question you, and you shall declare to me. Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?” (Job 38: 5-7 NRSV).

Each following verse in this chapter vividly puts forth a powerful ecological vision describing God as the answer to the question, “Who is at the center of things?” The ecological images inform our theology that it is God in all of His magnificence and mysterious glory that holds the world with the elements of nature and abundance of animal life within parameters of limits and care. The sense of relationship between Creator and creation is fundamental as divine providence is evidenced in this inter-connectedness.

Theologian Stephen Bouma-Prediger comments: “Though, like all creatures, made from dust, we humans are unique. We do not have the sight of an eagle or the strength of a lion. We do not run like a gazelle or swim like a dolphin. We cannot hear like a bat or smell like a bear. But the Bible attests, we are made in God’s image, after God’s likeness. This means we are God’s vicegerents. We are, in other words, called to rule as God rules...we are unique, but our uniqueness implies not superiority but service” (*For the Beauty of the Earth*, p. 123).

There is high interest in global environmental issues today and a wide spectrum of views. This issue encourages you to reflect on stewardship from the perspective of earth care. What does Scripture say about how we should think of the earth and its creatures? As managers of the Owner’s resources what implications come to view about the preference and attention we give to ecological concerns? Scripture does put forth a theology and ethics for the care of the earth for both individual and communal life. This is ‘natural’ as we look forward to “a glorious future—of a renewed heavenly earth, with a crystal-pure river and healing trees; of a gardened city, gates open to the riches of the world; of God dwelling with us at home in creation. A world of shalom” (Ibid., p. 116).

Informative and yet creative Dan Serns presents environmental ideas and biblical principles in his article, *Why Not Try This?* Richard de Lisser presents *Adventists and the Environment* with suggestions and models of implementation for churches. Nicolaus Satelmajer shares *Creation Sabbath* a global church endeavor to celebrate creation on this special Sabbath day in October. We also gratefully acknowledge South America’s Stewardship Director Miguel Pinheiro’s sermon on the importance of communion with God.

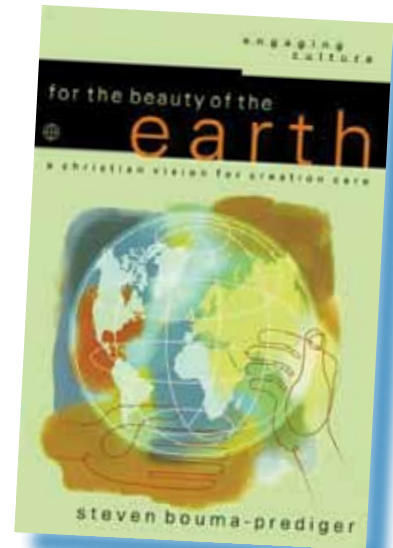
Alongside you in His service,

resources

For the Beauty of the Earth
A Christian Vision for Creation Care
by Steven Bouma-Prediger
Baker Academic
Grand Rapids, Michigan
2001 US \$24.99

At a time when it seems humans have erred much in their understanding and keeping of the planet, *For the Beauty of the Earth* explores the relationship between Christianity and the natural world in one of the most biblical treatments available on a theology of creation care. Richard J. Mouw, president, Fuller Theological Seminary, states: “This is an important book. Steven Bouma-Prediger combines theological depth with ecological savvy to issue a profound call to environmental discipleship. He makes his case in a way that both informs and inspires!”

To order go to www.bakeracademic.com.



Effective Stewardship Five Sessions
Doing What Matters Most DVD
by Acton Institute
Zondervan
Grand Rapids, Michigan
2009 US \$19.99 — Just Released!

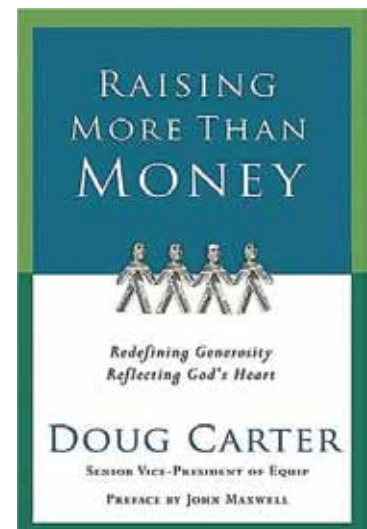
Christian stewardship is about more than the money we drop into the collection plate. Stewardship is everything we do after we say we believe. In this five session video study, hosted by Dave Stotts, along with the participant’s guide (\$7.99), you will learn how to think critically and biblically about the areas of responsibility that have been entrusted to you by God.

For DVD description, details, PREVIEW and to order go to www.zondervan.com.

Raising More Than Money
Redefining Generosity; Reflecting God’s Heart
by Doug M. Carter
Thomas Nelson
Nashville, Tennessee
2007 US \$24.99

People do not enter ministry because they like to ask for money, but most discover quickly that raising funds is essential if ministry is going to succeed. In *Raising More Than Money*, Doug M. Carter, senior vice president of EQUIP, shows that stewardship—raising money, raising Christian communities, lifting up the cause of Christ—does not just aid ministry; it *is* ministry. Using examples he has collected in his more than forty years in the ministry of development, Doug explains how to build relationships into stewardship, and then create powerful partnerships for ministry.

To order email the Christian Leadership Alliance Bookstore at cblt@trainingsys.com (10% discount for DS readers) or call Carolyn Thompson at 1-800-469-3560.



Stewards as Creationists and Adventists

*Erika F. Puni, Director
General Conference Stewardship*



Growing up as a Seventh-day Adventist on the Islands of the South Pacific, I heard very little said about Christian responsibility of the environment. On the other hand, we constantly heard sermons and discussions about eschatological events associated with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the millennium, and also of the larger picture of the future ultimate destruction of this world with God making all things new including a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21). I am not suggesting that as a church community we do not believe in personal responsibility for the earth that we live in, but I am saying that our strong emphasis on the Advent of Jesus may have given some people the wrong impression that we only care about going to heaven and have no concern for the environment today. Actually as Adventists, we believe and teach stewardship of the earth, and we can do more.

“We are God’s stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use” (*Seventh-day Adventist Believe*, 2005: 301,307). In this article, I submit to our readers that Christian stewards are both creationists (believe that Jesus as Creator made all things) and Adventists (believe that Jesus will come back to this earth as King of the Universe).

The biblical record begins with the assertion that “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” Genesis 1:1 (NIV). This statement of fact makes two very important theological points. First, before anything was made, God was. Second, the universe (the heavens and earth) as we know it is a product of God’s creation. Moreover, Adam and Eve (the first humans) were placed by God in the Garden of Eden as partners to extend His “rule” over His creation through their stewardship of the earth (Genesis 1:28; 2:8,15). Thus, from the very beginning of time, humans were given the special task of being stewards of the world not because they own it but because they accepted God as their Maker and Owner of all things.

Creator and owner of the universe

As a reminder of His sovereignty and ownership of the universe, God in His work of creation set time (the seventh day) aside (made holy) so that Adam, Eve and their descendants would recognize Him as their Creator. For the first humans Sabbath keeping was an act of faith in the God who had power to create and in His “completed” work of creation (Genesis 2:1-2). They did not need to do or add anything more to what God had made which was “good.” The Sabbath was God’s invitation for humans to come into His presence to rest and find communion in Him and with Him. Worship, in this context, was both a voluntary and spiritual response to everything that God was and is. Sabbath observance for Adam and Eve was to be an on-going love experience between them and the Creator just like their duty to care for earth.

In response to the question posed by the disciples about the end time and the sign of His coming, Jesus used parables to communicate truths about this subject in Matthew 24 and 25. In the parable of the “talents” (Matthew 25:14-30) Jesus makes the point that persons waiting for the Advent must work and be good stewards of the financial resources given to them by the “Master” (God). Accountability to God as a stewardship infers that value and principle is not limited only to money but also to other areas of human life and experience including care of the environment. This emphasis on personal responsibility and accountability on the



part of “Adventists” (individuals waiting for the coming of Jesus as King) is also highlighted in the parable of the “Judgment” (Matthew 25: 31-46). Jesus’ central point in both chapters is that our eschatology of the future must be informed by our theology and life experience of today.

In His last message for the world in Revelation 14, God makes another call for the inhabitants of the earth to honor and worship the Creator “who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water” (verse 7). This reference to the created works of God is not an incidental notation but a significant restatement of who God is. The worship of the Creator God includes the proper care and management of the world that He made. More importantly, this eternal message of God’s good news concludes with the depiction of the return of Jesus as King and coming for the harvest—a time of reckoning and rewards (Revelation 14:14). Our final standing with God at the end time rests on our willingness to acknowledge Him as our Creator, and obedience to His will as revealed in Jesus.

So what do these Bible passages and examples say to us as Christian stewards? They remind us that followers of Jesus are persons who accept His Creatorship, are faithful in their Christian stewardship that includes proper care and use of the earth’s resources, while waiting for Him to come again to reign forever and to make everything new. These individuals live in expectation of

the Advent and recognize their God-given responsibility in the present to society and the world they live in. Their hope is for a “new” earth in the future where the lion and the lamb will roam together and where its citizens live and abide by the Laws of the Creator. And, this is not in conflict with their present lifestyle of being good and responsible stewards of God’s rule in the world today.

stewardship window

news from the
director’s desk ...

Report from the Associate Director

As usual the first semester of a year is always busier than the second, but this year the landmark was to record in Nairobi a stewardship series for Hope Channel TV. With 50 programs planned, the recordings had to be scheduled in three different sessions.

The first recording session started in February. The second recording session took place the following month and the final recording was in June. In between recordings there were stewardship seminars in Central Mexican Union in April and in North Peru Union in May. The month of June was also punctuated by a stewardship weekend for the Nakuru Field in Kenya and a weekend in Bugema University in Uganda. In the month of July we had the privilege of serving the Cook Islands for a week and then the semester ended with a pastors retreat for the French Polynesian Mission in Tahiti.

We particularly commend the leaders who intentionally chose stewardship as their area of emphasis during their retreat. These leaders recognize that



Associate Director Jean-Luc Lézeau poses with the Nairobi TV recording team.

stewardship is first a spiritual matter before being a financial one.

Why Not Try This? ... Explore the Bible Evidence for Balanced Environmentalism

Dan Serns

*Ministerial Director
North Pacific Union Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists*



Dan Serns is currently the ministerial director of the North Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He is involved in soul winning, global missions, and church planting. Says Dan, "I have the greatest wife and children in the world!" His wife, Lois, is a high school math teacher, and they have three children: Jacob, Dustin, and Danesa. Dan's hobbies are family football, hiking, traveling, reading, and water skiing.

I was sitting at the breakfast table reflecting on the day ahead when the back of the cereal box grabbed my attention. "Save the World" the big headlines shouted.

"That's my mission" I almost said out loud. Between spoonfuls I began reflecting. "That's why Jesus came to this earth. As His followers our mission is to cooperate with Him in saving the world. This cereal box has reminded me of what is really important for me to do today."

Then I noticed the next sentence. "Save the World...One tree at a time." What? Shouldn't it say "Save the World...One person at a time"?

Is our mission as Adventists to save people or to save trees? Or are both included in our mission? What position should we as Adventists take in the growing debate about the environment?

As Seventh-day Adventists we issued a brief "Statement on the Environment" in 1995. And recently there have been articles in the *Adventist Review* that address this subject. But our ultimate source for God's wisdom is, of course, the Bible.

Twelve Bible Truths About the Environment

1. God is the Creator and Owner of this earth.
2. Mankind has a clear God-given role in relating to the earth.
3. God loves the animals He has created.
4. God provided trees, flowers, and vegetation for both beauty and usefulness.
5. God gives counsel on the use of His land and its jewels and minerals.
6. The weekly Sabbath is God's gift to mankind to remind us of Himself, His creation and His re-creative powers.
7. All God's creation is interdependent, but God's word recognizes a priority of value among the parts of creation.
8. Sin has caused a breakdown in all environmental relationships.
9. Jesus has provided redemption and reconciliation for all creation.
10. Jesus is the Sustainer of all creation and the Provider for all our needs.
11. God's final message reminds us of God's control of nature.
12. Sin, rather than earth, is the target of God's destruction and God, not mankind, decides when and how to destroy.

Why Not Become More Earth Friendly? Try These Twelve Practical Steps

Here are twelve practical steps an Adventist can take to be more earth friendly that are in harmony with our Fundamental Beliefs and counsel we have been given as a church.

1. *Do an intensive Bible study on God and His creation.*
 - a. How is this earth friendly? The foundation for all decisions in life for a Christ-follower is "What would please Jesus?" and "What does the Bible say?" Studying God's word in a humble and teachable way on any subject allows the Holy Spirit to reprogram our thinking so it reflects the thoughts, ideas and attitudes of heaven. The Creator, Owner, Sustainer, and Provider has placed in His word all that is needed to understand how to live a balanced, earth friendly lifestyle.

SCRIPTURE :
Job 38-41

- b. Related Adventist Fundamental Belief #1—Holy Scriptures.
- c. What is a simple first step I can take today?
 - i. Read Genesis 1:1-2:3 and imagine you were there at creation.
 - ii. Read Revelation 21-22 and picture what it will be like in the New Jerusalem.
 - iii. Read Genesis 3 and make a list of how earth changed as a result of the sin of Adam and Eve.
 - iv. Read Job 38-41 and list all things from nature described in the passage that you have personally observed.
 - v. Circle ten Proverbs that refer to nature.
 - vi. Read one chapter in Proverbs then go out and reflect on something in nature it refers to.
 - vii. Reflect on one passage and what it says about man’s relationship to His Creator, other creatures and God’s creation.
 - viii. Pick one of the “Twelve Bible Truths about the Environment” and read the related Bible passages.
- 2. *Move closer to nature or bring nature closer to you.*
 - a. Related Adventist Fundamental Belief #6—Creation.
 - b. What is a simple first step I can take today?
 - i. Take a day hike.
 - ii. Plan a camping trip soon.
 - iii. Grow a garden.
 - iv. Add plants and flowers around the house.
 - v. Plan to build a natural shelter and re-enact the Feast of Tabernacles.
- 3. *Eat more unprocessed food.*
 - a. Related Adventist Fundamental Belief #7— Nature of Man
 - b. What is a simple first step I can take today?
 - i. Eat three pieces of unprocessed fruit today.
 - ii. Clean out your refrigerator and pantry of anything that does not qualify as food according to the list in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14.
 - iii. Become familiar with the fresh produce section of your local grocery store.
 - iv. Decide to become a vegetarian if you are not already.
- 4. *Become an expert in some area of nature study.*
 - a. Related Adventist Fundamental Belief #8—Great Controversy.
 - b. What is a simple first step I can take today?
 - i. Take a nature walk and list evidences of sin that were probably not present in the perfect world God created in the beginning.
 - ii. Earn a Pathfinder Nature Study honor.
 - iii. Earn the Pathfinder “Naturalist Master” or “Conservation Master” Award.

*The Creator,
Owner, Sustainer,
and Provider has
placed in His word
all that is needed
to understand how
to live a balanced,
earth friendly
lifestyle.*



Why Not Try This? (continued)

5. *Be reconciled to your Creator*

- a. How is this earth friendly? At the heart of all good earth care is a recognition of and a respect for the Creator. Once we are reconciled to God we begin to participate in the work of reconciliation with other human beings and with all creation. When we respect our Creator and His omnipotence, we are more inclined to live Godly lives that respect ourselves, others and God's creation.
- b. Related Adventist Fundamental Belief #10—The Experience of Salvation.
- c. What is a simple first step I can take today?
 - i. Ask God right now to be in charge of every part of your life.
 - ii. Admit and confess your sins to God and thank Him for forgiving you and cleansing you of all unrighteousness.
 - iii. Commit yourself to getting to know your Creator better every day through Bible study, prayer, and surrender of your plans to His word.

6. *Participate in a ministry for the homeless.*

- a. Related Adventist Fundamental Belief #11—Growing in Christ.
- b. What is a simple first step I can take today?
 - i. Feed a hungry person.
 - ii. Take a food basket to someone who might need it.
 - iii. Volunteer at a soup kitchen.
 - iv. Write a donation check to a homeless shelter.
 - v. Read *Patriarchs and Prophets* Chapter 51 “God's Care

for the Poor” (pp 530-536).

7. *Go on a mission trip.*

- a. Related Adventist Fundamental Belief- #13 Remnant and Its Mission.
- b. What is a simple first step I can take today?
 - i. Give money to help someone else go, particularly a young person.
 - ii. Pray for God's work in a specific country every day for thirty days.
 - iii. Read mission stories at www.adventistmission.org.

8. *Wash the feet of someone you don't get along with.*

- a. Related Adventist Fundamental Belief #16—The Lords Supper.
- b. What is a simple first step I can take today?
 - i. Read Matthew 18:15-17 and list the steps Jesus gave us to reconcile with those who have wronged us.
 - ii. Read *Christ's Object Lessons* Chapter 19 “The Measure of Forgiveness” (pp. 243-251).
 - iii. Call someone who you need to talk to but don't feel like talking to.
 - iv. Write a note, letter or email to open communication and acknowledge a relationship problem with someone you don't get along with.
 - v. Find out from the church office, elder or pastor when is the next scheduled communion service and determine to be there.

9. *Remember every Sabbath to keep it holy.*

- a. How is this earth friendly? The Sabbath is a weekly reminder of the fact that God created the world and all nature in six days and rested the seventh. It is a God-given gift of rest from the fast pace of society so we can be refreshed. The Sabbath allows us time to be re-energized and to spend time out in the wonderful creation of God. Jesus spent His Sabbath mornings in Bible study, fellowship with others, and Sabbath afternoons in helping the poor and needy. All these activities take our minds away from mankind's accomplishments and focus them on God's accomplishments.
- b. Related Adventist Fundamental Belief #20—Sabbath
- c. What is a simple first step I can take today?
 - i. Determine to not work on Sabbath unless it is to care for the sick and needy or provide protection or assistance in extreme emergency.
 - ii. Inform your boss that you are no longer available to work Friday sunset to Saturday sunset.
 - iii. Plan a Sabbath welcoming activity for your family to do as the sun sets this Friday.
 - iv. Memorize the Sabbath commandment found in Exodus 20:8-11.
 - v. Give any employees and/or animals the Sabbath free according to the Sabbath commandment.
 - vi. Plan a Sabbath afternoon activity of helping those in need or visiting someone sick or discouraged spiritually.
 - vii. Plan a Sabbath afternoon nature walk and activity.

10. *Return tithe regularly and give offerings generously.*

- a. How is this earth friendly? Releasing the first ten percent of our income to the tithe fund we cannot control, and giving generous offerings, reminds us that the entire earth and everything in it belongs not to mankind but to God. It strikes at the root of greed and covetousness that is part of the human heart. It breaks us away from our self-centered exploitation of the world and the things and people in it. “God asks not only the tithe, but says we are to come to Him with tithes and offerings. Some will say that this was one of the rigorous laws binding upon the Hebrews; but it was not a burden to the willing heart that loved God. It is only when the selfish nature is made stronger by withholding that which God has given us that we might bless others, that we value earthly treasures above souls, above the blessings that are for the unselfish... Many have felt that the lot of Israel was hard because they were required to give the tithe and also make liberal offerings. An all-wise God knew what was best when He gave to His people the plan of systematic offerings. They found that when they tried to increase their possessions, by withholding from God their tithes and offerings, the effort was sure to be a failure... When we humbly use what God has given us for the honor of the Giver, we may feel at all times the peace and assurance that God's hand is over us for good; for the treasure which is used to advance the cause of God, and which is given to the needy in Christ's name, is given to Christ, and He lays it up for us in heaven. Then we grow rich. There is no danger of loss nor poverty when one has everlasting riches in heaven's bank. Covetousness is idolatry; and it was to aid us in keeping the commandments that God originated the plan for tithes and offerings.”
- b. Related Adventist Fundamental Belief #21—Stewardship.
- c. What is a simple first step I can take today?
 - i. Write a check for 10% of your most recent income and send it to your local church or conference tithe fund.
 - ii. Give an offering to help with church, conference, and world needs.
 - iii. Make a list of 100 things God owns.
 - iv. If you haven't been returning tithe, confess this as a sin to God and ask for His forgiveness and strength to follow Him from this day forward.

11. *Thin out your stuff.*

- a. Related Adventist Fundamental Belief #22—Christian Behavior
- b. What is a simple first step I can take today?
 - i. Sort one dresser drawer or closet section into four groups: Sell, Give Away, Throw Away or Keep.
 - ii. Give away something of value that you aren't using—a used car, nice outfit, piece of furniture or equipment, etc.—to someone else who can use it now.
 - iii. For each new item of clothing you buy over the next three months give away two items of clothing.
 - iv. Walk a mile or two instead of going shopping.
 - v. Reduce the trash on the planet by going a week without buying anything

unless it is essential to life.

- vi. Pick up trash along a highway or path.
- vii. Read the parable in Luke 12:15-21 and write a list of suggestions you would like to give to the rich fool. Then ask yourself what you would do if you received such a list of suggestions.
- viii. Watch "The Story of Stuff" at www.storyofstuff.com/ and share it with someone else.

12. *Be kind to animals.*

- a. Related Adventist Fundamental Belief #28—New Earth.
- b. What is a simple first step I can take today?
 - i. Sing a song about animals in family worship (e.g. “Animals, animals, Jesus made the animals”).
 - ii. Visit a zoo.
 - iii. Volunteer at a humane society.
 - iv. Take care of someone's animal for a few days.
 - v. Read Isaiah 11:6-9 and talk with someone about how animals will be different in the new earth from how they are today.

Why not pick a step, even a small one, and take action today to become more earth friendly?

Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs are found at www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html.

Adventists and the Environment

Richard de Lisser, PhD

*Communication/Stewardship Director
South England Conference of SDA*



*Dr. Richard J. de Lisser is a fourth generation Seventh-day Adventist and was baptized in 1978. Having worked as an administrative assistant to the Secretary of State for Education, Lord Baker of Dorking, he responded to the call to enter gospel ministry. Dr. de Lisser currently serves as communication and stewardship director for the South England Conference. He is married to Joanne Graham-de Lisser a health professional and God has gifted them with a 3 year old son, Akala Joshua Alexander. He has just completed his first book entitled, *The Credit Crunch Christian: 27 Ways to Lookup When Things are Looking Down*.*

Seventh-day Adventists around the world are concerned about the environment. Climate change, global warming, carbon emission are the daily staple diet of many a news editor as they prepare the newspapers for our daily consumption. The headlines grab our attention and arrest our thoughts and imaginations; will we have a viable planet to pass on to our children yet alone our children's children? New frontiers are being sought just in case the prophets of doom, death and destruction are right as the moon and beyond become the next step for

man and mankind. While back here on earth politicians, presidents, pontiffs, and prime ministers convene conferences, issue joint declarations and set targets to steer the world clear of disaster, requesting of us to think globally but act locally. But what organization is best placed to rise to this challenge than the Seventh-day Adventist church?

Enshrined in our 28 fundamental beliefs is the doctrine of stewardship which outlines the churches green agenda when it states: We are God's stewards entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessing of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use.

As a Church are we taking this responsibility seriously?

God has placed us on this earth as His image bearers to look after and manage His environment faithfully and lovingly. Seventh-day Adventists believe the preservation and nurture of the environment relates intimately with the way we serve God.

The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Administrative Committee in an approved and voted statement released in 1996 stated:

Unfortunately, men and women have been increasingly involved in an irresponsible destruction of the earth's resources, resulting in widespread suffering, environmental degradation, and the threat of climate change. While scientific research needs to continue, it is clear from the accumulated evidence that the increasing emission of destructive gasses, the massive destruction of the American rain forests, and the depletion of the protective mantle of ozone (the so-called greenhouse effect), are all threatening the earth's ecosystem. There are dire predictions of global warming, rising sea levels, increasing frequency of storms and destructive floods, and devastating desertification and droughts.

These problems are largely due to human selfishness and greed which result in ever-increasing production, unlimited consumption, and depletion of non-renewable resources. Solidarity with future generations is discussed, but the pressure of immediate interests is given priority. The ecological crisis is rooted in humankind's greed and refusal to practice good and faithful stewardship.

Seventh-day Adventism advocates a simple, wholesome lifestyle, where people do not step on the treadmill of unbridled over-consumption, accumulation of goods, and production of waste. A reformation of lifestyle is called for, based on respect for nature, restraint in the use of the world's resources, re-evaluation of one's needs, and reaffirmation of the dignity of created life.

What can the local church, conference, or union do to advocate this much needed reform?

To begin with there are internationally recognized Environmental Management Systems (EMS) such as ISO 14000. This is a set of management standards that enables organizations to identify and modify or control how their activity impacts on their environment. Further, EMS helps to improve the organizations' environmental performance continually, and to implement a systematic approach to setting environmental objectives and achievable and demonstrable targets. It also provides assurance to management that it is in control of the organizational processes and activities having an impact on the environment and assures employees and or volunteers that they are working for an environmentally responsible organization.

Examples of Environmental Adventists.

Churches can be encouraged to:

1. Economize.
2. Nurture future generations to think environmentally.
3. Value what we have now and pass on the earth legacy.
4. Initiate steps to work with agencies who are protecting the environment.
5. Recycle, remodel, reuse, reclaim, repair, and practice restraint.
6. Organize and create an environmental agenda.
7. Nature is life's lesson book; learn from it.
8. Manage earth's resources faithfully and lovingly.
9. Enhance energy efficiency and productivity.
10. Temperate: be balanced in all that we do.

At Newbold College Church

The Newbold College Church located in the South of England is a spacious contemporary building built with the environment in mind. The church opened in September 2002 integrates seamlessly into the landscape. To ensure that the view of the historic manor house, Moor Close, remains unrestricted, the church has been built into the contours of the gently sloping land, with the largest elements towards the boundaries of the site. Once inside the building there is a feeling of openness and transparency and the semi-circular seating arrangement ensures that the congregation can feel involved with the activities on the platform. One of the most innovative features is the green turf-covered flat roof over single storey spaces. The circular drum enclosing the main area of the church is clad in natural cedar blending into the trees in the background.

Eco-Champion Anna Surridge

The British Union Conference News recently reported the story of a 16 year old Adventist eco-champion by the name of Anna Surridge. Whether it is an eco-friendly hair dryer, recycling mobile phones, digging up the lawn to plant vegetables, or getting baptized, Anna is passionate about the environment and climate change. Living in South Wales she is one of six "Climate Change Champions" appointed by the Welsh Assembly to "help people change small things in their life to help the environment."

During 2009 she is traveling to various events highlighting the need to care for the environment. As well as visiting schools, she has met with Welsh Assembly ministers and visited the EU in Brussels.

This month she was one of the speakers at a "Countdown to Copenhagen" conference where she was able to share ideas with over 380 young people alongside the likes of Ben Saunders, the polar explorer. She encouraged the young people to leave messages on a 'graffiti wall' or to record a video message for the environment ministers to take to the upcoming Copenhagen Summit.

Anna lives a busy life. She has just finished her GCSE exams and attended her prom (in eco-friendly dress and by public transport), but she is equally passionate about her church. During her year as "Climate Change Champion" she also chose to get baptized not in the warmth of a heated baptistery in her home church of Ystrad Mynach. Anna chose the outdoors and the River Usk for her special day. In a full page spread in the *South Wales Echo* she stated that she, "worked out that

the electricity needed to raise the temperature of a baptistery to a comfortable temperature could be equivalent to making a thousand cups of tea."

During the year Anna has become quite media savvy appearing on TV, meeting with government ministers and celebrities, and being reported in various newspapers and newsletters several times. However, the report in the *South Wales Echo* was the highlight for her. "I'm just delighted to get my two favorite causes, environment and church, into one story," she said. "I'm passionate about climate change because it is happening here and now and if we don't do something about it, the consequences will affect us, and our environment will only get worse. I'm passionate about my faith because I love God and have such a loving church family."

Anna runs her own website about the environment www.anna.surridge.org.uk and is keen to spread the simple message that making small changes to your lifestyle can make a big difference to the wonderful world God has created for us to live in.



Sermon: Communion with God and Holiness



Miguel Pinheiro currently serves as stewardship director for the South American Division. Elder Pinheiro's desire is to

promote stewardship awareness as a lifestyle, daily holiness, implement spiritual enrichment seminars, and hold local church financial assessment. He and his wife, Perpétua, have two children: Michele and Emily.

Each day is a new opportunity that God gives us to remain in a saved relationship. Daily we need a new gift of power from on high. During the first hours of each morning we should renew our salvation in Christ in order to live like a saint during the day. This was the Savior's lifestyle when he was among us. As never before, we need to follow His example of communion with God.

Without daily receiving the power that comes from the Word we are not able to live as an authentic Christian because only those who daily renew the surrender of their life to the Savior receive power to be made authentic and true children of God. Without first receiving the power of God in our life for the day, we will be controlled by our carnal natures.

SCRIPTURE:
Matthew 6:33

So that these and other truths may be implanted deep within our mind, let us study the reasons why we should seek God during the first hours of each morning.

Priorities

Jesus stated, "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" Matthew 6:33 (NIV). Our mind was structured to first receive the Word and to be guided by it. As in the past, our steps to the heavenly Canaan are guided by the Lord.

"A man's steps are directed by the Lord. How then can anyone understand his own way?" Proverbs 20:24. The psalmist states that in order to identify the path to follow, it is necessary to develop a close relationship with the Lord. "Who, then, is the man that fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way chosen for him" Psalm 25:12. Our priorities will determine our life and spiritual direction. A significant question asks: "Is walking in an unknown land without a guide an intelligent consideration?" I suggest that like the children of Israel, we need a trustworthy guide in the difficult days in which we are living. They were guided by a pillar of fire during the night and a cloud during the day. As in the past, the Father also has provided a "pillar" to guide his people in our days. The Bible is this unfailing guide.

"The word of God, if studied and obeyed, would lead the children of men, as the Israelites were led by a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day. The Bible is God's will expressed to man. It is the only perfect standard of character, and marks out the duty of man in every circumstance of life" (*Testimonies to the Church*, Vol. 4, p. 313).

The prophetic message for our day is clear and direct: the most important and urgent commitment that we have in the first hours of each morning is to seek communion with God so that we may live out holiness during the day. The admonition is: "Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, 'Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.' This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will be molded more and more after the life of Christ" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 70).

Daily reality demonstrates that when we leave this most important time for later in the day, generally we will not keep it. Therefore before any activity we should accustom ourselves to put our communion with God first. Why is it dangerous to put God in second place? Because our hearts betray and deceive us as Deuteronomy 11:16 and Jeremiah 17:9 make clear. Early in the morning as we awaken and feel the need for a meal likewise we should feel our need for spiritual nourishment. The great challenge is to develop and practice the habit of waking up with hunger and thirst for the Word of God and going to this banquet to satisfy the soul with the living bread that descends from heaven.

Daily spiritual communion with God

Blessings from God upon his children are continual and for this reason we should praise Him at each moment. Developing and maintaining a habit of spiritual communion with God should be the most significant daily goal for each follower of Christ. The lifestyle of Jesus demonstrates how this is possible.

The prophetic word describes this daily practice: “He lived and thought and prayed. From hours spent with God He came forth morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the early hours of the new day the Lord awakened Him from His slumbers, and His soul and His lips were anointed with grace, that He might impart to others. His words were given Him fresh from the heavenly courts, words that He might speak in season to the weary and oppressed. ‘The Lord God hath given Me,’ He said, ‘the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned’ Isaiah 50:4.” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 140)

Jesus devoted the first hours of each morning to personal devotion. He did not do this sporadically but continually. In this manner He kept and maintained the habit of seeking God during the first hours of each morning. This lifestyle deeply touched the life of the disciples. In the following sentence the book indicated above states, “Christ’s disciples were much impressed by His prayers and by His habit of communion with God.” Each day we are deciding our destiny. We will follow the indication of the pillar of fire or the cloud by a safe route or we will follow the swampy, dangerous path that leads us to death. God has a plan laid out for our life in His Word and as the Apostle Paul states, “today is the day of salvation” (II Corinthians 6:2).

The present day on the other hand, can also be a day that is cursed, because the Enemy also has a plan for our life that is far from the Word of God. Therefore during the first hours of each morning we are free to choose or not choose God’s guidance as we find it in His Word.

The inner person renewed each day

The Bible teaching is clear and direct, salvation from the power of sin is for one day at a time. The theory of “once saved, always saved” is not biblical. Those saved from the penalty of sin upon accepting Christ as Savior, who are on the path to eternity or salvation have to keep in mind that salvation from the power of sin is daily, and should be developed with fear and trembling each day. Let us see what the Bible says:

“...Inwardly we are being renewed day by day.” II Corinthians 4:16 (NIV).

“I die every day...” I Corinthians 15:31. “...so that I can perfect my holiness in reverence to God.” II Corinthians 7:1 (NIV).

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:2 (NIV).

“But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.” Hebrews 3:13 (NIV).

“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.” Hebrews 3:15 (NIV).

“... ‘In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.’ I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.” II Corinthians 6:2 (NIV).

“Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you.” Joshua 3:5 (NIV).

How to have peace and joy in our hearts

Jeremiah 15:16: “Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts” (NKJV). Three matters deserve our attention in regard to this verse:

“*Your words were found*”—What does finding assume? To find something it is necessary to look for it. So, when I get up in the morning the Word of God is not going to look for me, but it is I who must search for it. I have to seek God during the first hours of each day and it should not be a superficial search; but must be done

with all my heart. Jeremiah characterizes this type of searching: “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13). My soul needs the Savior each morning. Without Him, it is empty, un-ordered and without guidance.

“*And I ate them*”—It is not enough to say that the Word is important, that it is good, that it is divine or that it saves. The Word must be “eaten,” I must place the divine nourishment into my heart. Only in this way will its nutrients enter into the blood flow of the soul and I will be able to have the life and energy that comes from God and goes directly into my life.

“*And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart*”—The individual who decides to make seeking God a priority during the first hours of the morning will have peace and joy throughout the day.

Conclusion

Walking with God and expanding our relationship with Him is a question of life and prolonging that life. In Deuteronomy 30:20, we read: “and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years...” (NIV).

Daily communion with God will allow us to live real and authentic Christianity. Daily receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit brings with it all of the life and power of Christ that makes us more than conquerors in all circumstances. Walking daily with God keeps us connected to heaven, and we receive a transforming influence directly from the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Those who will put on the whole armor of God and devote some time every day to meditation and prayer and to the study of the Scriptures will be connected with heaven that will have a saving, transforming influence upon those around them. Great thoughts, noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth and duty to God, will be theirs. They will be yearning for purity, for light, for love, for all the graces of heavenly birth” (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, p. 112).

Creation Sabbath: A Special Sabbath in Your Church

Nikolaus Satelmajer
Editor
Ministry Magazine



Nikolaus Satelmajer is editor of Ministry magazine an international journal for pastors. Dr. Satelmajer started his ministerial career as a pastor, became an administrator, and then went back to pastoring. From 1996-2005 he served as associate ministerial secretary emphasizing continuing education for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. In 2005, he was re-elected with specific assignment as editor of Ministry. Dr. Satelmajer enjoys researching and writing articles, book reviews, and chapters in books. He recently prepared a 60-page introduction for the reprinting of J. N. Andrews' History of the Sabbath and is enjoying his ongoing research on the Serbian and Croatian translations of the Bible. Dr. Satelmajer's greatest passions are family and ministry. His wife, Ruth, and he have four adult children, two sons-in-law, one daughter-in-law, and three grandchildren. Three other young people have also been a part of the Satelmajer home.

SCRIPTURE:
Genesis 1:1

Every Sabbath should be a special worship experience, but Sabbath, October 24, 2009, can be one of the most memorable Sabbaths of the year. On that Sabbath, Seventh-day Adventist congregations around the world will focus on the theme of *God as Creator of the world*. In this article we will share with you how you can plan for this special Sabbath.

Creation Sabbath

Why single out Sabbath, October 24, 2009? The 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin, usually credited as the father of the theory of evolution, has caused increased discussion throughout the world about the origin of the universe, earth, and life itself. Evolutionists also celebrate the year 2009, because it marks the 150th anniversary of Darwin's book, *On the Origin of the Species*. The debate about evolution and creation will always be there, but in our churches we can make a positive statement by focusing our worship on God as our Creator. That's the purpose of October 24, 2009.

Planning the October 24 worship service

Worship planning involves the pastor and various individuals. Let us assume that you are part of the team planning for the October 24 worship service. What will your worship be like on that special Sabbath? Let us go over some ways to help you prepare for this special Sabbath.

- **Plan:**

Planning is important, so carefully outline this worship. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide the planning. Outline the program so that you will use a variety of church members (age, gender, nationality, for instance) to participate in the worship service. Give the participants ample time to prepare for their part.

- **Theme:**

Because the theme is Creation Sabbath, ask how you can make it central to the worship time. Let us keep in mind that the purpose of Creation Sabbath is to feature creation and the Creator God—not a Sabbath when we debate about creation versus evolution. Certainly we may refer to the two conflicting explanations of how life started, but worship should focus on the God of our Creation on this special Creation Sabbath. Answer questions like: “What does it mean that God is our Creator?” “How is your daily life different because you know that God is your Creator?”

- **Scripture:**

Hundreds of Scripture passages focus on God as our Creator. In fact, one of our scientists, Dr. Timothy Standish of the Geoscience Research Institute, Loma Linda, California, told me that he once decided to read the Bible and make a list of all the texts referring to creation. We have posted these Scripture references on the Creation Sabbath website (www.creationsabbath.net). Have several individuals read a number of these passages. Perhaps you could ask some of the older members to read with some of the younger members.

Let us make Scripture central in our worship. Throughout the world, many of our hymnals also have responsive reading sections that you may want to consider, which are also listed on the Creation Sabbath website.

- **Prayer:**

God desires to hear our petitions, but prayer is much more than just telling God of our needs. It is also an opportunity for us to praise God—God our Creator—and thank Him for being involved in our lives. Ask yourself—how can we involve the whole congregation in prayer? For example, the person who leads in the main prayer can also lead the entire congregation in the Lord’s Prayer. The opening words, “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name” (Matthew 6:9), can bring peace to our souls for we belong to this holy God.

- **Children’s Story:**

Be creative and plan well for the children’s story. We have posted a number of children’s stories on the web, www.creationsabbath.net, as suggestions. Ask the person telling the children’s story to make it a special event.

- **Music:**

Find hymns and songs that focus on creation, the Sabbath, and, most important, God. If you have a choir, discuss the plans for this special Sabbath with the choir director in advance so that they can prepare in advance. The website also includes suggested hymns and songs.

- **Sermon:**

Because every part of the worship service has focused on God as Creator, the sermon should, of course, be on the same theme. The Bible has many rich passages that focus on God as our Creator so the speaker will have an abundance of material from which to work. On the website we have posted a number of sermon suggestions.

Need more help?

We have shared the major points that a group planning for Creation Sabbath should consider, but much more can be featured—let the Lord lead you in the possibilities. The planning group should provide the leadership and build enthusiasm for this special Sabbath. If you need more help, visit www.creationsabbath.net and you will find a variety of helpful material.

A Sabbath to remember

In Genesis 1:1 we meet God, our Creator. In Genesis 3 we are told about the entrance of sin. As discouraging as the description of this opening of the doorway to sin may be, we thank God that it does not end there. Revelation 22:20, 21 concludes with a plea from God’s people and a promise from Jesus Christ:

“He who testifies to these things say, ‘Yes, I am coming soon.’

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen.”

We need to be known as a people who believe in God’s promises. Every Sabbath nearly 100,000 congregations around the world hold worship services. Let us make October 24, 2009 a very special day for all ages when we publicly worship God as our Creator and thank Him for giving us life and hope. Let us praise God as we look forward to the day when He will recreate the world—a world without sin. In the meantime, let us recognize His majesty and assurance of His presence.

The debate about evolution and creation will always be there, but in our churches we can make a positive statement by focusing our worship on God as our Creator. That’s the purpose of October 24, 2009.



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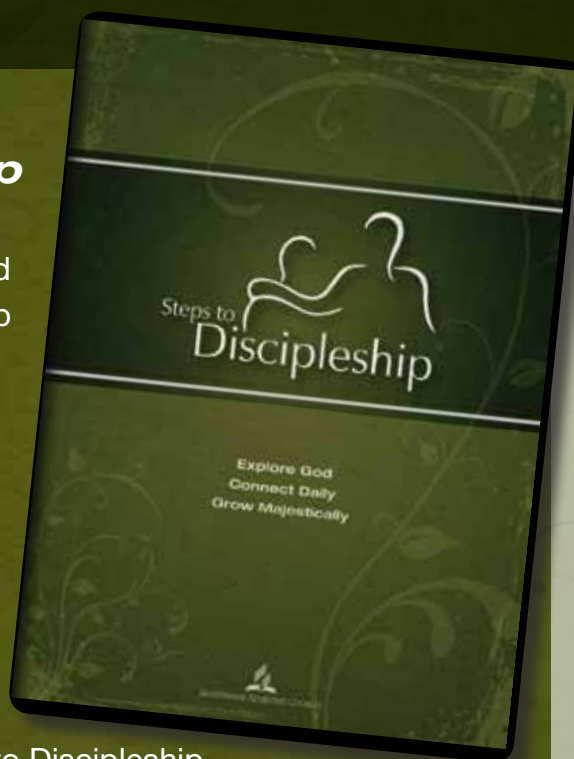
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