

I get up in the morning and I hear and watch the water rushing down Silver Creek out my window. I think of how so many people in the world would love to have that water.

The power and passion of Christians' environmental care comes from the clear teaching of the Bible:

- The whole creation — including the natural environment is the handiwork of God. (Genesis 1:1-2:2)
- Humans, made in the divine image, are to care for the earth. (Genesis 2:15)
- After the flood, God made a covenant, an agreement to care for people and creatures (Gen 9:9-17)
- The Natural world praises its creator. "You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands" (Isa. 55:12).
- Christ is the one by whom all things were created, in whom all things hold together, and through whom all things are reconciled to God. through his blood shed on the cross (Colossians 1:16-20)
- All creation awaits God's promised redemption (Romans 8:19-22).
- For evangelicals, creation care is Christian discipleship. It is honoring the Creator by respecting — not worshipping — the creation. It is caring for the poor, who suffer the most from environmental degradation. It is caring for one's family, especially for children, whose developing bodies are most vulnerable to pollutants.
- Service to God and the neighbor through ecological restoration projects and support for sustainable development;
- Worship that honors the Creator and celebrates creation;
- Management of buildings, land, and operations according to principles of environmental stewardship;

Environmentally concerned evangelicals often feel ourselves to be different in a culture that places consumption, materialism, and selfishness above the good of the neighbor and the rest of God's creation. But evangelical Christians know that our joy of life is not in things but in our relationship to Christ and people. We have more reason than others to keep God's planet healthy.

World Vision is an evangelical global organization that for years has brought relief and development to poor people in behalf of Christ. This last summer they added an official purpose to their relief and development organization. It is advocacy, addressing the injustice in global systems that cause suffering. One of those injustices is misuse of the earth's air, water and resources.

Mike Huckabee was asked last fall why fewer evangelicals identify with Republicans now than last election. He said, at that time, evangelical concerns were homosexuality and abortion. Now evangelicals are seeing we also need to be good stewards of the earth.

And so our United Methodist social principles stand for the development of renewable energy resources, cleanup of polluted air and soil and water. Fair trade products and food that has been ethically produced, like free range chickens and vegetables without chemicals.

We affirm the value of family farms. Food production in the hands of the many rather than in the hands of the few is more likely to produce a living for people in a way that doesn't make a few rich and many poor. It is more likely to give a fair return for honest work.

The social principles booklets are on a table in the entry area.

What to do

- Raise a garden

- Buy food raised close to home. It saves gas

- Replace old clothes with used clothes rather than new ones.

- Take kids on walks in natural places such as the Ripon College prairie

- Walk or bike around town

- Look for organically grown food to eat.

- Air dry clothes

- Turn off lights and appliances

- Use fabric bags to carry things. Every plastic bag ever made still exists. Paper and cloth can recycle through nature.

We're concerned about saving money as well as saving the planet. If we had converted to renewable energy sooner, our gas wouldn't cost so much now. And some of the things we can do to help the earth will also help the economy.

Eating food raised close to home financially helps area producers like Tom Bandt and Chuck Prellwitz and Mary Ellen Grahn and it reduces the gas for transporting food from away.

- Saving electricity saves us money.

But the reason Christians care for the earth is because it honors the God who gave it.

Read verses again.