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INHABITING EDEN: A BIBLICAL VISION OF NATURE

By Patricia K. Tull

ANCIENT NATURALISTS

In 2007–2008 I took a year-long sabbatical supported by a Lilly Faculty Fellowship from teaching Hebrew Bible at Louisville Presbyterian Seminary to write a commentary on the book of the eighth century B.C.E. prophet Isaiah.¹ During that same year my spouse and I attended a master gardener class through the Purdue Agricultural Extension Service in Indiana. These two activities converged as I noticed, more clearly than I had seen in many years of studying Isaiah, the ancient prophet's own observations of the natural world. He may not have been the earth's first naturalist poet, but he is certainly one of the oldest who is still read today.²

Isaiah begins, before addressing any humans at all, by calling heaven and earth as witnesses to divine frustration with God's human "children," who, Isaiah claims, know less about what is good for them than domestic animals do. In Isaiah's first speech Judah is compared to a spent cucumber field and an empty vineyard. Listeners are told that social justice will allow the community to "eat the good of the land," but continued inequities will cause them to be "eaten by the sword." Rebels are warned that they will wither like desiccated trees and unwatered gardens.

Isaiah goes on like this, drawing imagery from a deep reservoir of natural knowledge. Empires, kings, and merchants might rise and fall, even the Nile may dry up, but the earth and its wild inhabitants remain. Lebanon's giant cedars live to taunt the tyrant who would clear-cut them for profit. Mountains and trees break into song as they witness ever-newer acts of creation. People resemble grass; princes are mere stub-

ble. Thorns and thistles thrive where civilizations have fallen to ruin. Streams water the desert.

In short, Isaiah's imaginative world vibrates with nature's buzzing. Yet the Bible knows no word for "nature," nor for "culture," and no division between them. Humans inhabit the earth the way grasshoppers inhabit a field. We may call ourselves great, but on a cosmic scale, even whole nations are as insubstantial as fine dust.

The prophet invokes the larger-than-human world in very particular ways, ranging far and wide in botanical imagery, filling his poetry with trees, vines, crops, and grasses. But he is not alone in this fascination. Other biblical prophets hone in on agriculture, criticizing an international economy based on exported cash crops such as wheat, wine, and olive oil that enrich the elite at the expense of subsistence farmers.³ Yet other writers draw lessons in human humility from the wild animals with which we share the earth, or direct humans to live lightly with their land because it is only a loan from God.

Students of other traditional cultures and religions observe parallel interests among ancient writers worldwide.⁴ In fact, it is only relatively recently that humans have ignored the non-human world, trivializing it as vacation scenery or saleable resources. For most human generations, the earth has been viewed as home. Home, perhaps in the sense that our families are home: not always warm and fuzzy, not always safe, nor comfortable, but absolutely inevitable and fundamentally formative.

After completing the first volume of the Isaiah commentary, I paused to write another book, *Inhabiting Eden: Christians, the Bible, and the Ecological Crisis*.⁵ I wrote this book not because I believe the Christian scriptures offer modern people a blueprint for ecologically sensible living, but because so many Christians—as well as those from other faith traditions—do seek to learn from the Bible, and many Christians consider it authoritative. Yet just as most modern people fail to

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see the natural world alive around us, many also read the Bible without noticing its grounding in nature. My hope was to demonstrate that, if we listen carefully to our own religious traditions, they show us how far our present generation has strayed, and how we might rediscover human life as it was made to be lived.

DOMINION'S DOMINATION

Ask any group in the Western world, whether religious or not, what people think the Bible has to say about the natural world, and they will reply in unison, “Dominion!” Christian and Jewish readers often recognize that commercial exploitation and even destruction of mountains, oceans, and species bears little resemblance to either stewardship or gratitude. But most remain convinced that the first chapter of Genesis, the creation account itself, offers humans license to do with the natural world whatever we would like for our own benefit. Most people are not aware that the concept of dominion found in Genesis 1:26-28 has nothing to do with such behaviors. In fact, self-seeking human greed is inimical to biblical ethics. Even fewer readers know that the notion of “dominion” is by no means the sole or even primary understanding among scriptural writers of the human place in creation. Rather, it is a minority view.

Theological focus on the divine plan announced in Gen 1:26 for humankind to “have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth” has made this one of the Old Testament’s better known verses, virtually guaranteed to enter most contemporary environmental conversations, whether as defense of human actions or—increasingly—as opportunity to deflect blame to the past for what humans are doing now to the earth and its inhabitants. As biblical scholar Theodore Hiebert has observed:

Of all biblical texts, none has been discussed more in recent ecological literature than Gen-

esis 1:26-28. . . . Such widespread attention to a single image stems from and contributes to the belief that this is the biblical view. And thus almost all intellectual energy has been poured into the debate about whether this particular picture will work or not, whether it is an image of unbounded power that must be abandoned or an image of responsible stewardship that must be recovered.⁶

In the late 1960s, medievalist Lynn Townsend White famously laid the growing ecological crisis at the door of Western Christian ideas about “dominion,” ideas that in his words made Christianity “the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen,” so that “no item in the physical creation had any purpose save to serve man’s purposes”: “although man’s body is made of clay, he is not simply part of nature: he is made in God’s image.”⁷

Although White laid blame on the Bible itself, Carol Merchant and Anne M. Clifford have cited Francis Bacon’s seventeenth-century interpretation of Genesis 2-3 to promote nature’s subjugation.⁸ In his *Interpretation of Nature*, Bacon argued that knowledge and control of nature were lost in the fall, but could be regained through its conquest. The metaphors he employed, his “image of nature as a female to be controlled and penetrated,” which “has served to legitimate the exploitation and the rape of the earth’s natural resources” are shockingly violent.⁹

The much-abused idea of human dominion comes from isolating three verses—less than ten percent—of the first creation story in Genesis 1. Reading Genesis 1:26-28 in relation to the other nine-tenths of Genesis 1 yields a very different reading.¹⁰ Even more strikingly, other biblical accounts of creation portray humans as far less powerful, far less central.

Reflecting human self-fascination, the notion of dominion has received much more than its share of press, but reading the first creation story calls forth the following observations:

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First, most of the creation story as told in Genesis 1 precedes humans. This order resembles that of scientific accounts, which situate hominids on the cosmic timeline “within three hours of the stroke of midnight on New Year’s Eve, and *Homo sapiens* a mere twenty seconds before the hour.”¹¹

Second, in this account God speaks creation into being as if it possessed intelligence, summoning light, earth, sky, vegetation and animals to emerge. Each of these responds immediately and directly to God’s voice. In the five and a half days before humans enter the picture, God calls creation good six different times, displaying pleasure with the pre-human, non-human world.

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Third, a tenfold repetition in Genesis 1:11-25 of the term *min* (kind, species, as in “of every kind”), referring to plants, fruit trees, sea creatures, birds, land animals both (from the human

viewpoint) wild and domesticated, and “creepers,” indicates divine fascination not with a single species, but with a wide variety of swarming, teeming life on earth, what Genesis 2:1 calls “their multitude” or “their vast array.”

Fourth, sea creatures and birds are blessed and told to multiply long before humans are (1:22).

Fifth, even the command to “have dominion” (New Revised Standard Version) or to “rule” (New International Version) implies neither greed nor exploitation. If, as these verses claim, humans reflect God’s image, whatever rule these pronouncements may imagine is not self-seeking but generative.¹² Further, the list of dominion’s subjects is far from exhaustive. Animals are named: fish, birds, cattle, wild animals, and creeping things. But if we accept the New Revised Standard

Version’s and New International Version’s correction of verse 26 on the basis of ancient translations, and in accord with surrounding verses, the world’s plants and non-living elements are not included, and this creation story does not authorize destruction of mountains, rivers, or coastlines.¹³

Sixth, all animals, including humans, are offered the same food supply, intended for all together (verses 29-30). In fact, according to this account, plan A was universal vegetarianism. These verses do not support indirect killing through destruction of habitats and food systems, much less direct killing for food, fur, or fun.

Seventh, it is not until all is completed that anything is described as “very good.” This divine satisfaction applies not to humans but to everything, the sum total, all creation (verse 31).

With so many qualifiers to human importance embedded even within the passage that declares us rulers over other animals, it is perplexing that interpreters have so long fixated on ourselves. Many Christians, troubled by the disconnect between contemporary ecological realities and what they have always assumed about human dominion, are ready to hear something else.

SERVERS AND PRESERVERS

Two different accounts of creation in the Bible’s first two chapters suggest some breadth of cosmologies even in tiny ancient Israel. In the alternative story that begins in Genesis 2:4, even though the human’s appearance precedes that of other species, this earthling is not called ruler, but servant of the ground. Translations have obscured this role. The popular New Revised Standard Version, for instance, reads Genesis 2:15 as: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden *to till it and keep it*,” and other contemporary translations read similarly. The final verb *leshamrah* (to keep, watch, guard it) is translated accurately enough. But the preceding one, *le’abdah*,

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when thinned down to “till,” loses its semantic resonance. Intransitive, this verb can mean “to work.” But when transitive, as here, its meaning doesn’t become, as in English, “to work something,” that is, “to make something else work.” Rather it means “to serve” something, in this case the garden of Eden. The human’s place is not to make the garden work, but to work for it. Genesis 2 pictures the human’s role not as ruler but as servant or caretaker.

Sharp distinctions between humans and animals are difficult to draw from Genesis 2. In Genesis, both humans and animals are called *nephesh hayah*, living creatures. This phrase applies to aquatic life (Genesis 1:20, 21), land animals (verse 24; 2:19; 9:10), birds (9:10), and in fact “all flesh” (9:15, 16)—and in 2:7 it also applies to humans. Translators obscure this: almost all recent translations read here “living being.” But the ancient writer did not make this distinction.

In addition, whereas in Genesis 1 each group of living creatures is spawned by its own habitat (the sea, the land, etc.), in Genesis 2 we all come from the same place. In this agriculturally infused story, humans are formed from the ground, just as all other life is.¹⁴

Genesis 2 is by no means alone in drawing the human role differently from “dominion.” Psalm 104 places humans in a timeshare with the lions, who roam the same haunts at night that humans do in the day. Although the psalm displays interest in and knowledge about the natural world—from meteorology to astronomy to physical geography to natural habitats of many species—it nowhere implies that humans are any more than one of the many fascinating creatures that reflect—in their dependence, life, and death—their creator’s glory.

Descriptions of creation in Isaiah 40:12-31 and in the divine speeches in Job 38-39 emphasize not human centrality or control, but our transience, our weakness, even our non-comprehension of the created world: “The nations are like a drop from a bucket,” the exilic prophet called “Second Isaiah” asserts,

and human rulers are as ephemeral as winter wheat: “Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely is their shoot rooted in the earth when God breathes on them and they dry up, and the tempest carries them off like stubble” (verse 24). For his part, Job, who was not present when God laid the earth’s foundations, can’t claim to know anything about the world’s workings (Job 38:24-27). He cannot explain the life cycles of mountain goats and deer, nor tame wild animals, nor comprehend God’s affection for creatures that seem foolish (39:1-25). Even a domesticated horse is too powerful for human command.

Other scriptural writers likewise imagine humans inhabiting a world far more powerful than we are that we can neither understand nor control. It is populated by wild animals and wild vegetation (Isaiah 34:11-15). It is characterized by wild forces—earthquakes (Psalm 68:8), storms (Psalm 57:1), flood (Psalm 69:2), drought (Jeremiah 14:1-6). The prophets compare empires to powerful floods sweeping lands away and envision restoration as verdant fields and vines. The book of Proverbs instructs humans to learn from ants, spiders, lions, and eagles. Sometimes majestically and sometimes terrifyingly, biblical poetry and narrative announce that we are anything but in control. Biblical scriptures as a whole voice reverence and care for, not self-centered rule over, the larger-than-human world.

RELEARNING KINSHIP

For many years I have taken seminary students newly initiated in the Hebrew language to a neighboring synagogue to take part in the Friday evening prayers. Many have never visited either a synagogue or a mosque and find themselves intrigued with the similarities to and differences from worship they know. One night the young woman who sat next to me cried silently through the entire service. Afterward, thinking perhaps that the vulnerability of worship had touched some hidden pain, I asked her if she were all right. “More than fine,” she answered, startled as if

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waking from sleep. “Being here tonight is like finding out I have family I didn’t know I had.”

She woke up that evening to human neighbors she had not recognized as kin before. I have often seen others, perhaps in less dramatic ways, waking to awareness of bonds with an even wider family, the family of verdant life on our planet, a web of being that encompasses us all. This web is being badly shaken now; it is being torn by us, because we haven’t yet learned how to live well within its bounds.

Many are saying the human disconnection from the natural world is not primarily a technological problem, but a spiritual one—we don’t understand what humans are here for, or what we need, or what satisfies our longings. We have been conditioned, especially in the past two generations, to turn our backs on traditional values such as humility, frugality, gratitude, and simplicity, and to allow ourselves to be tyrannized by carefully pre-programmed cravings for material goods that far exceed our needs and capacities. We need something else to live for.

I wrote *Inhabiting Eden* with the hope of helping Christians regain an appropriate awe for, and active concern for, all life on earth. The book begins by exploring the problem of change and the many precedents for productive changes in human thinking and action. It goes on to discuss relations between humans and nature as they unfold in the first four chapters of Genesis, and to bring biblical ethics to bear on several interrelated ecological issues: consumerism, agriculture, toxic waste, and climate change.

I hope groups of Christians will read and discuss this book together and allow a different vision to take shape in their communities: a vision of human flourishing in a flourishing world; a vision of serving and preserving the Eden we inhabit. I also hope it will be a useful tool for environmental advocates who wish to address spiritual themes and language underlying Western understandings of the human place and role on earth. The remaining sections of this essay draw

upon the opening chapter of *Inhabiting Eden*.

THE CHALLENGE

One January I was traveling in South India with my daughter Claire, who lives in Nepal. When our host in Coimbatore took us to the train station to return to Bangalore, he boarded with us, settling us across the aisle from a nun in full habit, explaining to her in Tamil who we were, where we were going, and for all we knew, how ignorant we were about Indian transit. She nodded in our direction. She was wearing the white and blue habit of Mother Teresa’s Missionaries of Charity, and I was entranced. All my romanticism about Mother Teresa, about nuns, and about travel in India drowned out apprehensions about finding our way.

We set out among the mountains. Throughout South India’s flatlands, everywhere we had traveled, along every road, we had passed masses of people working, walking, driving, biking, sitting, eating, sweeping, bathing, cooking, laughing—as if all humanity had congregated on the tip of South Asia to sink it. But there was no road beside this track, and for the first time in three weeks we saw

open countryside, mountains almost close enough to touch. I smiled at my daughter and then at the sister, who was eating her lunch, a box of chicken. We ate a couple of bananas

and I looked for a waste bin and, finding none, wondered if it was proper to throw the peels from the train. The sister finished her chicken, stood up, leaned over the two people sitting between her and the open window, and tossed box, drinking cup, napkins, fork, bones, the whole litter of a fast food meal, into the

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mountain, and then sat down and took out a prayer book.

It's tempting to shrug and say, that's a different culture. But on the Ohio River near our house, hundreds of thousands congregate for the annual fireworks display that wakes up all creation, Thunder over Louisville. The trash that strews roads and sidewalks from the river to downtown the next morning puts American manners badly on display. This is something more: a mentality that the earth is our waste bin.

Once I was talking to a colleague, a left-leaning scholar, in her office. She commended some environmental deed or another as she threw an empty, recyclable Coke bottle into her waste basket.

I tell these stories not because they are so egregious but because they are so common. If being religious, or being in public, or even being verbally committed to ecological causes cannot help us re-examine small actions, what will change us in the large ones? I myself am just as guilty: if the nun trashed the mountainside, I had trashed the stratosphere by jetting across the world, even if it was to see my daughter. Although ecological awareness has often inspired me to stay put, it has not led me to cease flying altogether. And perhaps this is part of the issue—we are social beings, and while some may be more committed than others to improving ecological behavior, we are limited both by personal habits and by what society as a whole makes possible.

In his book *The Creation*, written as a letter to Christian preachers, Harvard biologist E.O. Wilson calls religion and science “the two most powerful forces in the world today.” He comments: “If religion and science could be united on the common ground of biological conservation, the problem would soon be solved. If there is any moral precept shared by people of all beliefs, it is that we owe ourselves and future generations a beautiful, rich, and healthful environment.”¹⁵

We may search for technological answers to the

multiple ecological problems we face, but the questions are really human ones: What do we value? How do our lives and values line up? Do we see ourselves as part of the magnificent web of life, or do we, like Esau, trade our birthright for a momentary mess of stew?

Wilson argues that science can provide information about the biosphere, “the totality of all life, creator of all air, cleanser of all water, manager of all soil, but itself a fragile membrane that barely clings to the face of the planet.”¹⁶ Religious leaders, he said, help shape awareness of and gratitude for this complex and tender sphere. There can be no change in action without changes in perception of who we are and to whom and what we owe allegiance.

Many people look to the Bible for guidance in contemporary life. Scripture doesn't by any means tell us all that we might like to understand. But if we remove some modern blinders we will find it says a great deal more than we think about our ties with the rest of creation; ties we must now reclaim; ties that will not only lead us into restoring our surroundings, but into joys that consumer culture cannot offer.

Scripture tells us that our original forebears lost the garden of Eden before they realized what they had. Not ever having been there myself, I have trouble picturing a world more exquisite than our own. It's not just the snowcapped peak of Fishtale Mountain behind my daughter's house in Pokhara, nor the vast red hues of the Grand Canyon, nor the Smoky Mountains and Shenandoah Valley. It's the mockingbird practicing its repertoire in the burning bush; it's the maple tree in the backyard, changing with the seasons from greens to oranges to intricate, rugged browns. Each locale has its bits of Eden, habitats to inherit, enjoy, tend, and bequeath to our descendants.

We are approaching a turning point in history, one that will tell us whether we truly are the *Homo sapiens*, the “wise ones,” we call ourselves. It's time to dig into our spiritual heritage to find wisdom for crucial decisions that face us all.

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We are not alone in this. Every generation faces challenges for which our upbringing has not directly prepared us—challenges economic, military, moral, religious, and social. To overcome problems our parents and grandparents did not foresee, we find ourselves forced to re-examine established assumptions. Change is hard enough for individuals. It is far more difficult to motivate a whole society to work together, particularly in a time as contentious and individualistic as our own. Until a critical mass of people are convinced of the necessity—convinced in heart and soul, as well as mind—change does not take root. Such conviction is hard to find when the crisis is unprecedented. What the world has not seen before, we resist seeing now.

Christians who rely on Scripture for guidance are sometimes dismayed that the Bible does not give clear direction about contemporary issues unknown to the ancient world. We search the Bible to see whether passages overlooked in the past, when asked new questions, may offer unforeseen wisdom. Careful reading of Scripture can indeed lend insight for approaching the current ecological crisis.

This crisis is both multifaceted and urgent. Despite strides made over the past several decades, challenges continue to intensify:

Water. Because of overuse and misuse, and because of increasing population, drought, and pollution, fewer and fewer of the earth's people enjoy access to clean, drinkable water. What was once seen as a basic right is being commodified as the "new gold." Many say that the next war will not be fought over oil, but water. Oceans are warming and acidifying, and seas are overfished. Nitrogen runoff from farming has created algae blooms that kill ocean plants and animals, creating large dead zones along the coasts.

Land use. As the population not only expands numerically but demands more, wild lands worldwide have vanished into suburban sprawl and industrial farms. Top soil is disappearing. Tropical rainforests

are being clear-cut for timber and for cattle grazing. Species that made their homes in these places have become extinct, upsetting nature's balance.

Trash and toxic waste. Non-biodegradable waste is filling the planet. In each of the earth's oceans floats a large patch of plastic waste. Some say that the Pacific Garbage Patch is as large as the United States, poisoning sea creatures that try to feed from it. Industries and individuals use the air, water, and ground as toxic garbage dumps, sickening people and other life. Newer generations of electronic toys have created new toxicities as computer waste is dumped into landfills or sent to developing countries for dismantling, exposing families to toxic metals.

Energy. Increasingly over the past century, most of our energy has come from non-renewable coal, oil, and natural gas. As these resources become less accessible, it takes more energy and more risk to mine them. Wars are being fought over access. As the population increases and as more people prosper, demand and competition are rising.

Climate change. According to environmental scientists worldwide, other problems pale next to the swiftly growing crisis of global climate change, signaled by severe weather events such as heat waves, droughts, deluges, winds, and hurricanes. Immediate, broadscale energy conservation measures and development of renewable energy can prevent destruction of life as we know it. Though scientists agree that the problems are severe but solvable, political debates—especially in the United States—continue to stall meaningful action.

TO DWELL IS TO SERVE

As humans we can cure these ills, but only if we accept the challenge of change. We tend toward inertia, toward thinking that whatever we grew up with was normative, even our God-given right. In the United States we have believed in unlimited resources and ever-increasing wealth, yesterday's luxuries becom-

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ing today's entitlements. Yet since the world began, change has never ceased. Insofar as change promises to bring more of the life to which we would like to become accustomed, we embrace it. But there is no rule that says change will always be onward and upward; in fact, history shows that changes can also worsen conditions. We need not look past Hurricane Katrina in 2005 or the economic crisis of 2008 to see this. When such shifts occur, failure to adjust expectations can exacerbate otherwise solvable problems.

Yet the need for change is nothing new. The human story consists of a series of crisis points—moments when people have been moved to re-examine assumptions, to change direction, to turn from what they were doing and follow another path, even against their convenience.

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As we can see in scripture as well as in recent history, farsighted change in direction stands at the beginning of our most world-shaping

moments. Scripture tells such stories: of Noah, called to save his family and every animal species from a great flood that destroyed and remade the world; of Abraham and Sarah, called to move to a land they had never seen; of the Pharaoh's daughter, called to adopt a baby found along the riverbank; of Esther, called to confront the Persian emperor, saving her nation; of ordinary fishermen called to travel the Mediterranean world preaching a Jewish savior.

Not all changes are individual. In fact, named individuals hardly ever act alone. Scriptures tell, for instance, of the remaking of the Hebrew people at Sinai, promising to follow the God who delivered them from slavery, and of the reformation of the Jewish nation after the Babylonian exile, rebuilding the ruined city of Jerusalem. The book of Acts records adaptations made by the first Christian communities as they negotiated

changed relationships with both Jews and Gentiles.

Scripture is filled with such turning points. And so is modern history. Consider the abolition of the slave trade and of slavery in the nineteenth century, and the continuing struggle against human trafficking around the world today. This struggle is not over, but we have made progress. The ongoing pursuit of women's equality and rights has taken many generations, but our lives are different today from those even fifty years ago. Important environmental gains also mark the last two generations in much of the world, even as we face daunting global ecological challenges ahead.

But the combined power of religion and science of which Wilson speaks, and the lessons of the Bible itself, remind us that the human experience consists of significant turns away from destructive prior norms and toward greater justice and responsibility. Today humanity is called to make such a turn, consonant with the meaning and potential of our own creation. Faith and hope tell us that we can answer that call—that concerned individuals, businesses, and governments acting together can change human behavior and serve the living planet, the Eden in which we dwell.

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NOTES

1. P.K. Tull, *Isaiah 1-39*, Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary 14A (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2010). *Isaiah 40-66* is forthcoming.
2. Observations about Isaiah's natural world are gathered in P.K. Tull, "Persistent Vegetative States: People as Plants and Plants as People in Isaiah," in *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions of Isaiah*, ed. J. Everson and P. Kim, (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2009), 17-34.
3. See, for example, D.C. Hopkins, "Dynamics of Agriculture in Monarchical Israel," *Society for Biblical Literature Seminar Papers 22* (1983): 17-34; M. Chaney, "Bitter Bounty: The Dynamics of Political Critique by the Eighth-Century Prophets," in *Reformed Faith and Economics*, ed. Robert L. Stivers (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989), 15-30; and M.J. M. Coomber, "Caught in the Crossfire? Economic Injustice and Prophetic Motivation in Eighth-Century Judah," *Biblical Interpretation 19* (2011): 396-432.
4. See, for example, the discussions of religious texts in B. Taylor, ed., *The Encyclopedia*

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of Religion and Nature (New York: Continuum, 2009); Roger Gottlieb, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Ecology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); and the several volumes in the Harvard University Press series *Religions of the World and Ecology*, edited by M.E. Tucker and J.A. Grim.

5. P.K. Tull, *Inhabiting Eden: Christians, the Bible, and the Ecological Crisis* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2013).

6. T. Hiebert, *The Yahwist's Landscape: Nature and Religion in Early Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 156.

7. L.T. White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," <http://www.uvm.edu/~gflomenh/ENV-NGO-PA395/articles/Lynn-White.pdf>. Originally published in *Science* 155 (1967): 1203-7, at 1204.

8. C. Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women and the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 164-90; A.M. Clifford, "Feminist Perspectives on Science: Implications for an Ecological Theology of Creation," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 8 (1992): 65-90.

9. Clifford, "Feminist Perspectives," 73.

10. Bridgette Kahl calls Genesis 1:26-28's history of interpretation "an instructive lesson in one-sided and selective Bible-reading." B. Kahl, "Human Culture and the Integrity of Creation: Biblical Reflections on Genesis 1-11," *Ecumenical Review* 39 [1987]: 128-37, at 130.

11. W.P. Brown, *The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 63.

12. Much has come to light about the ancient worldview underlying the dual notions of "image of God" and "dominion" found in Genesis 1. Ancient kings, viewed as "divine image-bearers, appointed representatives of God on earth," placed statues, or images, of themselves throughout their empires to remind subjects of their presence. P. Enns, *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say about Human Origins* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2012), xv.

13. The New Revised Standard Version and New International Version follow the ancient Syriac translation and the opinions of a large number of scholars in restoring the three-letter word meaning "wild animals (of the earth)" to verse 26 (as in verse 25), rather than reading "all (the earth)," which abruptly interrupts the list of species.

14. Other observations that may be made about Genesis 2 include a more shared and egalitarian understanding of the relationship between the humans and animals of the garden than interpreters have read, since "helper" in Hebrew (used to describe God in the Psalms) does not connote "assistant," and even naming does not imply superiority, but rather the human preference for speech. In Genesis 16:13, even God is renamed by a human, a homeless pregnant woman named Hagar.

15. E.O. Wilson, *The Creation: An Appeal to Save Life on Earth* (New York: Norton & Co., 2006), 5.

16. *Ibid.*, 27.