

2020

Creation Care as Caring for Human Beings: An Environmental Justice Case Study

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Recommended Citation

Lamp, Jeffrey S.; Moder, Kathryn J.; Munhoffen, Megan R.; Rich, Cade A.; and Von Atzigen, Nathan B. (2020) "Creation Care as Caring for Human Beings: An Environmental Justice Case Study," *Spiritus: ORU Journal of Theology*. Vol. 5 : No. 1 , Article 11.
Available at: <https://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/spiritus/vol5/iss1/11>

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CREATION CARE AS CARING FOR HUMAN BEINGS

AN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CASE STUDY¹

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Spiritus 5.1 (2020) 137–150

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Keywords *creation care, mercury, environmental justice, ecology, healing*

Abstract

Caring for God's creation is a burgeoning area of interest among Christians in recent decades. In many Christian circles, however, caring for creation is not given high priority in rankings of the duties of Christian disciples in the world. This article will argue that caring for creation is a biblically mandated call for God's people in the world and derives from the role of human beings as caretakers of creation, creation's status as a recipient of God's salvation in Christ, and the connection between human beings and the other-than-human creation. If creation care is understood as an act of healing creation, then given the relationship between human beings and the rest of creation, healing creation will frequently result in healing human beings. The case study of mercury emissions from coal-fueled power plants and the health of fetuses will provide a point of entry into this discussion.

Introduction

Joined in marriage, a young couple discovers after years of patiently waiting in God's timing, that they are expecting. Through the months of preparation both mentally and physically, both parents cannot help but anticipate all of the memories that will be made with the new baby. Days will be spent walking in the park with a stroller in one hand while holding hands. The discovery of the pregnancy was a God-given miracle in itself. The doctors informed the couple that the chances were unlikely, but

they persevered in faith. Living in a small town in New Hampshire, family and friends quickly heard about the news. The community celebrated together throughout the duration of the pregnancy until baby Steven's premature arrival. An emergency procedure was conducted, and Steven was born weighing under four pounds, an unhealthy weight for a newborn. With the whole hospital room in anticipation, the family waited for Steven to cry, but the baby was in complete silence, a sign of under-development in the brain. While the emergency response team urgently placed him in a 24/7 care unit, the couple asked themselves what could have caused this. Unbeknown to them, the coal-fired power plant nearby has been releasing hundreds of harmful chemicals for decades. One in particular is the culprit, mercury.

This hypothetical situation leads to the theological question of Christian duty.² Is it a Christ-follower's job to do something about the release of these anthropogenic pollutants? Has God called us to protect mothers by protecting the earth? Asked another way, are healing for human beings and healing for creation connected? This article argues that Christians should be concerned for creation because doing so is obeying God's command to serve and protect creation, acting on behalf of human suffering brings God glory, and ultimately, because caring for creation is inherently caring for people. The article will use a particular environmental issue to frame the discussion: the effects of mercury on the human fetus and the responsibility of Christians to respond to this crisis.

Mercury and the Unborn

A study conducted by Mothers and Children's Environmental Health measured the levels of mercury in the blood of hundreds of pregnant mothers because of their concern with the potential consequences of mercury. During this study, an association between high levels of mercury in the blood and low birth weight following a pregnancy was discovered.³ Other studies have indicated that as many as one of every six babies born in the United States has unhealthy levels of mercury in their bloodstreams.⁴

Mercury is a toxic metal that is a public health concern due to its tendency to accumulate in organs and its harmful effects on the human body. One specific type is organic mercury, which is released from electric power, manufacturing, and industrial plants. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) warns expecting and fertile mothers that mercury exposure must be kept to a minimum.⁵ When mercury is released in the atmosphere, methylmercury is the actual chemical absorbed in the bloodstream, and due to its fat solubility, it can diffuse into the placenta and negatively affect fetus health, triggering early delivery and causing low birth weight.⁶

Further, exposure to mercury largely impacts the nervous system and developing brain growth of fetuses. Regular exposure to mercury increases the risk of such maladies. Take, for example, populations exposed through high levels of mercury in fish, where, “Among selected subsistence fishing populations, between 1.5/1000 and 17/1000 children showed cognitive impairment (mild mental retardation) caused by the consumption of fish containing mercury.”⁷ Negative health effects of mercury extend beyond the unborn.

Neurological and behavioral disorders may be observed after inhalation, ingestion or dermal exposure of different mercury compounds. Symptoms include tremors, insomnia, memory loss, neuromuscular effects, headaches and cognitive and motor dysfunction. Mild, subclinical signs of central nervous system toxicity can be seen in workers exposed to an elemental mercury level in the air of 20 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ or more for several years. Kidney effects have been reported, ranging from increased protein in the urine to kidney failure.⁸

The primary mechanism through which human beings are exposed to mercury is called biomagnification. When mercury is released into the atmosphere naturally, through volcanos or evaporating water, or by human activity, through burning fossil fuels and municipal waste, it is transported by rain and wind into the ocean. It is then ingested by small aquatic organisms and is stored in their fat tissue. The toxicity levels are magnified as top predators such as sea-birds, bald eagles, seals, and eventually humans ingest this toxic chemical by eating organisms lower in the food chain.⁹ The resulting methylmercury poisoning damages the central nervous system, impairs kidney and cardiovascular function, causes developmental disorders, and even causes death.¹⁰

Attempts to address the matter of mercury emissions from coal-powered electric generating units (EGUs) have a complex history, one that involves participation from Christians in their implementation.¹¹ In 1990, Congress authorized the USEPA to establish standards to limit the emission of mercury and other pollutants (e.g., arsenic, nickel, dioxins and furans, acid gases, and SO_2) into the air under Section 112 of the Clean Air Act (CAA). In December 2000, the USEPA issued a finding stating that it was appropriate for the agency to issue regulations for EGUs pursuant to Section 112 of the CAA. However, industry groups immediately filed lawsuits challenging the USEPA’s authority to take this action. In March 2005, the USEPA revised its 2000 finding, delisting EGUs from its 2000 finding on the grounds that it was not appropriate for the USEPA to regulate EGUs under Section 112 of the CAA.¹² Various environmental groups and other entities filed a lawsuit to challenge this action, and in

February 2008 the Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit vacated the 2005 action. In December of 2008, these interests filed a complaint with the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia arguing that the USEPA had neglected its regulatory responsibilities by not establishing emissions limits mandated by Congress in 1990. The USEPA settled that litigation, and agreed to sign a notice of rulemaking by March 16, 2011, and a notice of final rulemaking by December 16, 2011. On December 16, 2011, the USEPA released these standards in the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS). This document, known as the Mercury Rule, was published in the Federal Register on February 16, 2012. The USEPA estimated that approximately 1,100 coal burning EGUs would be affected by MATS. The MATS standards target a ninety percent reduction in mercury emissions by 2016.

The adoption of MATS in 2012, however, was not the end of the story. Immediately after the adoption of the rule, there were challenges raised to halt implementation of the Mercury Rule, notably by Oklahoma Senator James Inhofe, then-ranking Republican on the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. Senator Inhofe introduced a Senate resolution to block the implementation of the Mercury Rule.¹³ Though this effort to halt implementation failed, in large part due to the testimony before the Senate of Mitch Hescoc, president and CEO of the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN), who framed the issue as a pro-life matter due to the effects of mercury on the unborn, this did not dissuade opponents of MATS to work for its overturn. In 2015, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that the USEPA did not properly consider industry costs as it wrote MATS, though it allowed the rule to stand while the USEPA went back to consider this. In the same year, fifteen states joined EGUs and coal companies to challenge the rule in the U.S. Court for the District of Columbia. Dramatic political shifts, however, dealt a serious blow to MATS. Since adoption of MATS, Republicans gained control of both the Senate and House of Representatives, and Donald Trump was elected president in 2016. Within months of his inauguration, the Trump administration asked that oral arguments scheduled as a result of the 2015 filing in the U.S. Court for the District of Columbia be delayed. It was a curious series of circumstances, for the USEPA was charged in 2015 with defending MATS, but with the election of Trump, the USEPA was restaffed and positioned to work for the overturn of MATS. However, in December 2018, the Trump administration decided to maintain the Obama-era mercury regulations, largely in response to utilities that had already complied with MATS, though there were stipulations implemented that would limit how health gains and the calculation of benefits from such regulations would occur, making future regulation more difficult.¹⁴ With Trump's appointment of Andrew Wheeler, an attorney and former coal industry

lobbyist, to head the USEPA in 2019, renewed efforts to nullify MATS have occurred. With this appointment EEN president Mitchell Hescox has redoubled his efforts to argue for the continuation of MATS on the basis of a pro-life argument.¹⁵

The battle around MATS illustrates a key component of Christian care for creation. It shows that, among other things, it is concerned with healing, for the health and wellbeing of human beings. However, as also illustrated by this case study, the health of human beings is connected with care for the environment. So to care for human beings in many cases entails caring for the environment in which they live. This is certainly a pragmatic consideration, but is it one integral to Christian faith? Asked another way, is the care of creation, which we might describe as the healing of creation, something that Scripture calls for us to do? To this we now turn our attention.

Care for and the Redemption of Creation

So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” (Gen 1:27–28).¹⁶

God has given responsibility for creation to humankind. The progression in Genesis is simple. Contrary to other ancient Near Eastern cultures that view human beings as an “afterthought” of the gods that were intended to be slave labor, the ancient Israelite view of humankind is an elevated view where human beings are the “centerpiece of [God’s] creation.”¹⁷ In Genesis, the creation of humanity is the climax of the creation story.¹⁸ Human beings are created in God’s image, meaning that they are “symbols of [God’s] presence” and “his representatives as they are in relationship to him.”¹⁹ As they represent God and his dominion on the earth, humanity is given authority over creation and Adam and Eve are made rulers of every plant and animal on earth. The following generations are quick to embrace this calling. By the second generation, we see some form of farming and ranching, as shown in the story of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4). Human ability to manipulate the environment, shaping it to our needs, is an innate, God given mandate. This raises the question of what it means to be the rulers of the earth, especially in light of the fall of human beings (cf. Genesis 3). Why have we been given this gift, and what are we to do with it?

When discussing God as a creator and the role of human beings as those who “tend” and “protect” creation,²⁰ it is important to note that creation was not a one-time event. Colossians 1:15–18 reads:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything.

Creation is an ongoing process as God in Christ continues to “hold together” the world. Christ is “the Mediator of creation” and the “sphere within which the work of creation takes place.”²¹ Jesus is the “starting-point of the new creation,” and the one who sustains the world.²² Verse 17 “proclaims his guardianship over all things” and proves “the cosmos (and all who inhabit it) owes its existence, coherence, and continuance to Christ.”²³ Thus, since Christ is so intricately tied to creation in its origin and its sustenance, it stands to reason that human beings should honor creation as they honor Christ.

This creation, however, is itself suffering from corruption resulting from the effects of human sin. This point is made in Rom 8:18–23, which reads:

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.

God is continually investing in and holding together a world that needs redemption and is suffering. As Paul suggests, the fall was not limited to human beings, and neither is redemption. God’s redemption is meant for the whole of creation, and everything anticipates it. In this passage “Paul presents [a] cosmic outworking of salvation in strong Adam terms, as the final reversal of [humanity]’s failure and climax of [its] restoration.”²⁴ Just as God has redeemed humanity he longs to redeem creation.

Therefore, human beings stand in unity with creation when they call upon the Lord's salvation. Further, "the glorious future that awaits the children of God accords with the superior place given humanity in the creation."²⁵ The calling of humanity, as set forth in God's call to care for the earth in Genesis, is to bring all of creation to redemption. Humanity is involved in the redemption of creation, as argued by John Chrysostom: "Where [humanity] leads the creation will follow, since it was made for [human beings]."²⁶ It is the role of humanity to lead creation into redemption.

However, the corruption of creation is not the mere presence of death. The corruption of creation is evidenced by an environment that is toxic to life. In a world where children die in their mothers' wombs because the world around them has poisoned them, the corruption is not just present in the death of the child but rather it is rooted in the fact that the very creation that God appointed to serve humanity now fights it. When this occurs, creation is working contrary to its intended purpose as its intended caretakers fail to lead it into redemption. The corruption of the earth is a corruption of its purpose. Thus, denying the redemption and protection of the earth is to deny God's own will. By ignoring creation, we steal its right to experience the redemption of Christ and to serve humanity.

Caring for Creation as Caring for People

In addition to caring for creation because creation is included in God's plan for redemption, Christians should also protect the environment because by doing so they act to address human suffering and bring God glory. Jeffrey S. Lamp has argued that reading the Bible through the lens of environmental justice enables readers of the Bible to empathize with the plight of creation so adversely affected by environmental degradation by identifying with human beings who also suffer from the effects of environmental degradation.²⁷ This is a tactical move that seeks to motivate care for creation because addressing current ecological crises has a benefit for human beings.

Indeed, the substance behind this tactical move is found in the Bible itself. The gospels show Jesus commissioning his people to protect, advocate for, and serve one another (Matt 22:39). In the Old Testament, at the first act of human violence in Genesis 4, the connection between nature and humanity is further demonstrated. The text reads,

And the LORD said, "What have you done? Listen; your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground! And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

When you till the ground, it will no longer yield to you its strength; you will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth.” (Gen 4:10–12)

Cain’s failure to honor God resulted in jealousy, which ultimately became the excuse for his slaughtering of Abel, who honored God with the first of that over which he had been declared a caretaker. This failure to exercise proper dominion and to honor God in the natural world is the result of Adam’s curse with respect to tending to the land. These two issues are tied together, as the first murder is met with abhorrence from the Lord. More importantly for our purposes, creation itself cries out to the LORD in this passage. Just as creation groans “for the revealing of the children of God” in Romans 8, it also cries out against injustice in Genesis 4. Further, Cain’s punishment later “became a metaphor of divine judgment for the authors of the prophetic literature.”²⁸ In Isaiah 26, the people are similarly promised that the earth will reveal the blood that has been shed upon the ground. Once again, creation is affected by injustice and testifies to the injustice of human beings. It reveals the sins of the people.

While this passage creates a connection between murder and the earth, it also introduces the first act of injustice of one human against another and is the basis for the commandment in Exod 20:13, “you shall not murder.” Is refraining from murder the only command from God in reference to others? This is clearly not the case, as Ps 82:3–4 reads, “Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.” The call to care for and to defend the Lord’s people is a clear command that is common in the Old Testament.²⁹ The responsibility of Christians to rescue the afflicted and weak is ultimately an invitation to be like God and to care for those for whom the Lord cares. In Proverbs, the sage says, “Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself call out and not be answered” (21:13). The word “poor” in this verse is translated from the Hebrew word עֲנִי, which speaks of the “helpless” or “powerless.”³⁰ To ignore the oppressed is to disqualify oneself from divine response; to respond to injustice and deliver the abused is to partner with the Lord in his quest for redemption. Just as creation protests injustice and even cries out to the Lord on the behalf of the oppressed, Christians should also care for the poor and the disenfranchised. Further, if creation is being manipulated in such a way that it is harming people, such as we have demonstrated in this article with the mercury case study, Christians should act quickly to care for creation so that people will also benefit. If Christians do not act, then we ignore the commands of the Psalmist and the wisdom writer.

Further, the Hebrew prophets have much to say about persistent oppression. Amos boldly declares, in a portion of the book referred to as the “book of woes,”³¹ that the

apostate people suffer judgement because they “trample on the poor and take from them levies of grain” (5:11).³² The cry of this prophet expresses the innermost thoughts of the Lord, and reveals that he despises the festivals of the people, their offerings, and their songs. Instead of ritual, the desire of the Lord is portrayed in this eloquent prophetic declaration: “Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (5:24). Just as sin and idolatry stand contrary to covenantal fidelity, injustice is equally as devastating. The failure to enact the justice of God on the earth disqualified the chosen people from enjoying the blessings of the covenant. To tolerate injustice is to breach covenant; to breach covenant is to embrace apostasy. Today, to ignore the environmental problems (such as anthropogenic mercury poisoning) is to ignore people; to ignore people is to ignore God.

Is the connection between creation, injustice, and murder only in the Old Testament, or does the New Testament comment on these matters? Again today, is failure to address environmental problems that are killing people and harming fetuses in some sense analogous to murder? Though the statement above may be strong, it carries weight. Christians who ignore problems that we have discussed allow for children of God to be harmed, and in many cases, killed.

Though many modern Christians show little interest in the responsibility of believers to care for creation, the problem of mercury poisoning should be important to all Christians because the New Testament is adamantly clear about the mission of Christians on this earth. Both Jesus and Paul emphasize this truth. In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus performs a miracle in which he brings calm to the sea (Matt 8:23–27//Mark 4:35–41//Luke 8:22–25). Ecological interpreters of the Bible have seen in this episode an instance in which Jesus brings healing to an aspect of the other-than-human creation that at the moment is threatening the wellbeing of the disciples in the boat with Jesus.³³ In bringing healing to creation, here depicted as experiencing the effects of a fallen world order, Jesus also ministers to the human beings experiencing the ravages of a corrupted world. Viewing Jesus as an exemplar here, Christians, of all people, should work for the wellbeing of creation, for in doing so, they are also caring for human beings. In this way, Christians reflect the concerns of God who cares for creation, human and other-than-human alike.

Recognizing that the heart of the Father is to care for his children in the world he created, humanity’s role in this process is evident in scripture. In Luke, Jesus says, “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Luke 6:31). Additionally, in Matthew, Jesus calls his followers to care for others who cannot care for themselves. He warns concerning the end times, “And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me’”

(Matt 25:40). This statement is a stern warning for many Christians who have ignored and abandoned the children of God, subjecting them to preventable states of destitution. John echoes Jesus' sentiment when he writes, "How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?" (1 John 3:17). And indeed, how can God's love abide in those who acknowledge a source of harm that it is in their power to remove, yet continue to allow pain, death, and harm? Surely, this was the mindset of God in sending Jesus to die in the first place. As he recognized the ultimate pain of sin and sacrifice, the Father chose to intervene as opposed to stand by and watch his children suffer corruption and death.

Call To Action

In the modern world, the great temptation of the church is to separate the physical and spiritual realms in such a way that it disregards physical circumstances and only seeks to bring spiritual reconciliation. The oppressed masses are ignored in the name of a spiritual assignment. In the midst of our spiritual conquests, we forget that "God so loved the world," meaning "the sum total of everything here and now, the orderly universe,"³⁴ and that caring for creation is caring for people. Our case study of mercury has demonstrated that human activity is harming both the unborn and the born. Will Christians recognize their role as caretakers over the earth and the importance of caring for people? If so, what will they do about the injustice that is taking place in our day through degradation of the environment?

The book of James makes it clear that faith without action is not faith at all. In James 2, "James appears to be combatting some form of misunderstanding that has developed in the church."³⁵ Namely, can one have faith without works as evidence? In verses 15–17, James states: "If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,' and yet do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead." Commenting on this verse, Hilary of Arles beautifully notes that "true love has two sides to it—help for the body and help for the soul."³⁶ Martin Dibelius refers to these verses in James as a "parable" to illustrate the author's point that faith without action is vain.³⁷ Just as James uses this example of those "who wish the poor well and do nothing to help them"³⁸ to describe those with illegitimate faith, this same principle applies to Christians today who ignore the oppressed. The words "go in peace" function "as a religious cover for the failure to act."³⁹ Similarly, to hear of the effects of environmental harm on human beings and refuse action is to exercise false faith. To share the gospel without responding to crisis is to fulfill religious duty but to ignore religious cause. To protest abortion and show no concern for the influence of mercury on the human fetus

is inconsistent. Rather than turning a blind eye to environmental problems, let Christians respond with urgency to the aid of those affected by this crisis. Maybe then, when the Christian faith becomes a religion of action, the world will once again know us by our love.



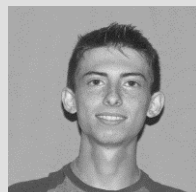
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Notes

¹ This article originated as a student paper for an Honors Program course at Oral Roberts University, Science and Global Sustainability, in the Spring 2019 semester, co-taught by John Korstad and Jeffrey S. Lamp. The bulk of the paper's substance and organization is that of the students in the course, Kathryn Moder, Megan Munhofen, Cade Rich, and Nathan Von

Atzigen, with editorial oversight and some additional content, mostly regarding the regulatory situation, provided by Jeffrey S. Lamp.

² This situation was inspired by the events that occurred in Japan in the 1950s regarding mercury emissions and birth defects. See Takashi Yorifuji, Shigeru Takaoka, and Philippe Grandjean, “Accelerated Functional Losses in Ageing Congenital Minamata Disease Patients,” *Neurotoxicology and Teratology* 69 (September 2018), 49–53.

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¹⁰ New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, “Mercury,” 2–3.

¹¹ United States Government Printing Office, *Federal Register* 77:32 (16 February 2012), 9306–66, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-02-16/pdf/2012-806.pdf> (25 August 2019).

¹² Interestingly, at the same time that the USEPA argued that it was not appropriate to regulate EGUs, it also issued the Clean Air Mercury Rule to reduce emissions from EGUs, making the U.S. the first country in the world to regulate mercury emissions. The rule, part of the Bush administration’s goal to improve air quality across the U.S., would hold current and future EGUs accountable for the amount of mercury they emitted into the air. EGUs would be required to acquire wet scrubbers to remove the harmful pollutants out of the steam generated by EGUs. For discussion, see Ravi K. Srivastava et al., “Control of Mercury Emissions from Coal-Fired Electric Utility Boilers,” *Environmental Science and Technology*, 2006, 1385–93, <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/pdf/10.1021/es062639u>, (25 August 2019); and USEPA, “Fact Sheet—EPA’s Clean Air Mercury Rule,” n.p.

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- ¹⁸ John D. W. Watts, *Genesis 1–15*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco: Word Books Publisher, 1987), 27.
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- ²⁰ Per the translation of Gen 2:15 by Sandra Richter, “Environmental Law in Deuteronomy: One Lens on a Biblical Theology for Creation Care,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 20 (2010), 376.
- ²¹ Peter T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco: Word Books Publisher, 1982), 45.
- ²² N. T. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 78.
- ²³ Todd D. Still, *Colossians*, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary Revised Edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 291.
- ²⁴ James D. G. Dunn, *Romans*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco: Word Books Publisher, 1988), 467.
- ²⁵ Everett F. Harrison and Donald A. Hagner, *Romans*, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary Revised Edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 137.
- ²⁶ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans* 14. Quotation from Gerald Bray, ed., *Romans*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 217.
- ²⁷ Jeffrey S. Lamp, *Reading Green: Tactical Considerations for Reading the Bible Ecologically* (New York: Peter Lang, 2017), 35–38.
- ²⁸ John H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary Revised Edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 100.
- ²⁹ Derek Kidner observes, “Scripture, from the flood story onwards, shows the patience of God orientated to perfecting salvation, not towards condoning the corruption which

meanwhile abuses it (cf. 2 Pet. 3:9, 13, 15).” See Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 329.

³⁰ Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann Jakob Stamm, “לָגַל,” *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. and ed. M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1:221.

³¹ Francis I. Anderson and David Noel Freedman, *Amos*, Anchor Bible Commentary (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 43.

³² The phrase translated “trample on the poor” is a *hapax legomenon*. It is even suggested that a viable translation could be “to plunder the poor.” In either case, the language here is strong and “describes the reversal of one’s expectations. Because the upper class has enlarged its property and wealth at the expense of the poor, its very own possessions will be taken from it.” Shalom M. Paul, *Amos*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 172–73.

³³ Michael Trainor, *About Earth’s Child: An Ecological Listening to the Gospel of Luke* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2012), 153–54.

³⁴ Walter Bauer, “κόσμος,” *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, rev. and ed. Frederick W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 561.

³⁵ Ralph P. Martin, *James*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco: Word Books Publisher, 1987), 80.

³⁶ Hilary of Arles, *Introductory Tractate on the Letter to James*. Quotation from Gerald Bray, ed., *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 28.

³⁷ Martin Dibelius, *James*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 152.

³⁸ Scott McKnight, *The Letter of James*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2011), 230.

³⁹ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Letter of James*, Anchor Bible Commentary (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 239.