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AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH focuses on Al Gore and his travels in support of his efforts to educate the public about the severity of the climate crisis. Gore says, “I’ve been trying to tell this story for a long time and I feel as if I’ve failed to get the message across.” The film closely follows a Keynote presentation (dubbed “the slide show”) that Gore presented throughout the world. It intersperses Gore’s exploration of data and predictions regarding climate change and its potential for disaster with Gore’s life story.

The film includes segments intended to refute critics who say that global warming is unproven or that warming will be insignificant. For example, Gore discusses the possibility of the collapse of a major ice sheet in Greenland or in West Antarctica, either of which could raise global sea levels by approximately 20 feet (6 m), flooding coastal areas and producing 100 million refugees. Melt water from Greenland, because of its lower salinity, could then halt the currents that keep northern Europe warm and quickly

With wit, smarts and hope, this film ultimately brings home Gore’s persuasive argument that we can no longer afford to view global warming as a political issue—rather, it is the biggest moral challenge facing our global civilization.

Directed by Davis Guggenheim, **AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH** features Al Gore, and is produced by Laurie David, Lawrence Bender and Scott Z. Burns. Jeff Skoll and Guggenheim are the executive producers and the co-producer is Leslie Chilcott.



Ellen G. White was a woman of remarkable spiritual gifts who lived most of her life during the nineteenth century (1827-1915), yet through her writings she is still making a revolutionary impact on millions of people around the world. She has written more than 5,000 periodical articles and 40 books; but today, including compilations from her 50,000 pages of manuscript, more than 100 titles are available in English. She is the most translated woman writer in the entire history of literature, and the most translated American author of either gender. We believe that Mrs. White was more than a gifted writer; she was appointed by God as a special messenger to draw the world’s attention to the Holy Scriptures and help prepare people for Christ’s second advent. [p. 10]



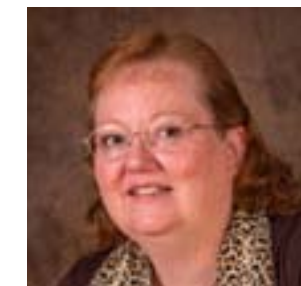
Hiskia Missah is as an Associate Director in the General Conference Youth Ministries Department. A youth leader at heart Dr. Missah has been involved in youth work for more than 30 years. [p. 5]



Corrado Cozzi is the youth director of the Euro-Africa Division of SDA. Read his report on the AMiCUS International Student Congress, *Warming*. [p. 14]



Patti Emanuele is a freelance writer and author of three books who has contributed to Guide magazine and many other Christian and non-Christian publications. [p. 36 - 43]



Kimberley Tagert-Paul is a free-lance author working from Muskegon, MI. She has had the privilege of publishing over 250 articles/stories/devotionals, but enjoys writing for **young people the most**. [p. 32 - 35]



Robert ‘Bob’ Holbrook is the youth director for the Oklahoma Conference of SDA. Passionate about God’s World, Bob is a lover of nature and the outdoors. Read his article on mammals and their environment. [p. 6]



6



10



14

FEATURES

6/ Mammals and Their Environment by Robert Holbrook Is the dictionary wrong? Finding the missing piece.

9/ Remembering James Joiner former editor of the *Youth Ministry Accent*.

10/ The True Relation of God and Nature by Ellen G. White A look at God in nature, as told over 100 years ago by EGW.

14/ Warming by Corrado Cozzi A report on the 4th International AMiCUS Congress organized by the Education and Youth Ministries departments of the Euro-Africa Division.

COVER by Jonatán Tejel

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DEPARTMENTS

2 [viewIT](#) /documentary review

3 [contributors](#) to this issue

5 [editorial](#) /ecology by hiskia missah

13 [readIT](#) /good books to read

25 [ideaPac](#) /programs and ideas

45 [Club Time](#) /adventurer and pathfinder information

ECOLOGY

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?

What is Ecology? Ecology is the study of how living things and their environment interact with each other. For example, if you study how spraying insecticides to get rid of the worms from rotting the apples can affect the health of the people who eat the apples, that is ecology. Cutting trees in the forest to make paper or build new houses can cause deforestation, which in the end can cause many side-effects such as flood, increased carbon dioxide in the air causing ozone layer reduction and a decrease in the amount of oxygen in the air. This endangers not only human beings but also other living organisms on Earth. That is Ecology.

Why then study Ecology? Studying ecology will help us think clearer and have a better understanding of the results of our actions. An understanding of ecology is indispensable for the continued existence of human beings. Our Earth has been experiencing ecological crisis. We see problems of climate change, global warming, ozone layer reduction, deforestation, and the disappearance of many endangered species on the land and in the sea. Many of these problems are caused by human activities.

As long as we are still on earth we have to do all we can to help make the earth a nice and safe place to stay not only for our generation but for future generations as

well. A study showed that global warming is caused by the emission of greenhouse gases: 72% of the totally emitted greenhouse gases is carbon dioxide (CO₂), 18% methane and 9% nitrous oxide (NO_x). Carbon dioxide emissions, therefore, are the biggest contributors to global warming.

Things that we individually can do to help reduce carbon dioxide emissions are:

Do not smoke, check your car smoke emission regularly, turn off your electrical devices that are not in use such as: computers, laptops, printers, TV, DVD players, video games, cable boxes, etc., try to wear your pants, jeans, and jacket more than once before washing them, do not wash your towel every day, do not cut trees down if it is not necessary—instead plant trees, shrubs, greeneries, and flower gardens in your surroundings. Through our participation we can have a safer planet to stay and enjoy before the time when Jesus takes us to a better place where everything will be perfect. ■

God bless,

Hiskia I Missah
Associate Director

MAMMALS and THEIR ENVIRONMENT

by Robert Holbrook



It seems that something is missing here. I suppose we could properly sum up “animals, plants, people and their environment” with the use of one word: Nature. So Ecology purports to be a study of relationships in nature... Ok, so what’s missing? The little book *Education* beginning on page 119 says: “He alone who recognizes in nature his Father’s handiwork...learns from the things of nature their deepest lessons, and receives their highest ministry.”

If we are going to study relationships; if we desire to learn anything useful from Nature, we can only do so through the understanding of God’s purposes and of His creative power. Continuing reading from the above quotation on the next page: “nature becomes a key to the treasure house of the word. Children should be encouraged to search out in nature the objects that illustrate Bible teach-

ings, and to trace in the Bible the similitude drawn from nature. They should search out, both in nature and Holy Writ, every object representing Christ, and those also that He employed in illustrating truth. Thus may they learn to see Him in tree and vine, in lily and rose, in sun and star. They may learn to hear His voice in the song of birds, in the sighing of trees, in the rolling thunder, and the music of the sea. And EVERY OBJECT in nature will repeat to them His precious lessons.”

Our problem is that very few objects in nature tell us much of

anything. We are bored by too many trees around or we are bored by the lack of trees around. Flowers are all the same, except for being different colors, and not “my favorite color” at that. Loud cracks of thunder cause us to shudder and run for cover. Birds begin to sing way too early in the morning and wake us up long before we want to be disturbed. The sea is only a beach to go to and get a good tan or see skin as far the eye can see. And vines? They are nothing but a lot of tangled underbrush that keep us from going where we want to go. And then how about all those other things out there! Snakes, spiders, creepy, crawly things that scare us, are poisonous, bite or sting, or just are frightening even if they do nothing at all to us and are trying to get away from us as fast as they can. Oh, and did I forget the lowly mouse?

Most of us today—especially those of us who live in our impres-

sive huge metropolitan areas of the world—do indeed suffer from what Richard Louv calls NDD or Nature Deficit Disorder and it reflects in our attitudes towards most anything that is even remotely associated with terms such as nature, wilderness, the bush, the wilds, or outdoors. We find our comfort zone to include shopping malls, giant-sized supermarkets, and awesome buildings—designed to satisfy the needs of entire communities without ever actually stepping out into the sunshine, and our own living rooms or bedrooms where we spend hours on end, totally engrossed in today’s latest high tech equipment. It is both interesting and sad, that when a person who enjoys nature and the outdoors arrives in a country or other area for the first time and asks about local parks, wildlife refuges, or other areas where nature is the focus, they are met with blank stares and after some hesitation are pointed in the general direction of a zoo.

Richard Louv, in his book about the recent research that has been done regarding the impact of nature on children, points out that abstinence of nature in the life of a child is tantamount to withholding their oxygen. (*Last Child in the Woods*, p. 108) One wonders just how nearly suffocated most of us are and don’t even realize it!

As a church, we Seventh-day Adventists have, since our beginnings, taught that Genesis is as valid today as ever. We have strongly insisted that God is Creator. We preach that He has the power to recreate destroyed lives because it is He who created us in the beginning. We give verbal acceptance of Paul’s comments in Romans chapter 1 that all that can be known

about God and His character can be learned from nature; therefore we humans are all without excuse. Paul Gorman, the director of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment is very emphatic on this point: “The extent that we separate our children from creation is the extent to which we separate them from the creator—from God...Any religious faith that acts as an accomplice to this separation is heretical and sinful.” Oops! Notice the word “acts”. What we preach is irrelevant, words are nothing—actions are what counts. Have we reached the point that we say one thing from pulpits and in the classrooms but practice something completely different when it comes to the focus we give in youth ministry, at summer camps, at youth rallies, at spiritual retreats, or for social times? I recall a statement made by an old Youth Director a few decades ago “If you want to be a youth leader, you must be an outdoorsman first”. How many of our youth leaders today are highly proficient in computers and guitars and know nothing about God’s world—have we become “heretical and sinful” in our youth ministry? To quote one last time Dr. Louv: “Passion does not arrive on videotape or on a CD; passion is personal. Passion is lifted from the earth itself by the muddy hands of the young; it travels along grass-stained sleeves to the heart.”

Let’s try this definition thing again, Ecology: the study of relations between animals, plants, people and their environment guided by the Holy Spirit to better understand our Creator, His character and His purpose for our lives.

Now here’s something we can get passionate about! ☐

ECOLOGY: the study of relations between animals, plants, people and their environment guided by the Holy Spirit to better understand our Creator, His character and His purpose for our lives. —Robert Holbrook

FAST FACTS ON GLOBAL WARMING/CLIMATE CHANGE

Yes. Earth is already showing many signs of worldwide climate change

- Average temperatures have climbed 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit (0.8 degree Celsius) around the world since 1880, much of this in recent decades, according to NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies.
- The rate of warming is increasing. The 20th century's last two decades were the hottest in 400 years and possibly the warmest for several millennia, according to a number of climate studies. And the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports that 11 of the past 12 years are among the dozen warmest since 1850.
- An upsurge in the amount of extreme weather events, such as wildfires, heat waves, and strong tropical storms, is also attributed in part to climate change by some experts.

ARE HUMANS CAUSING IT?

- "Very likely," the IPCC said in a February 2007 report. The report, based on the work of some 2,500 scientists in more than 130 countries, concluded that humans have caused all or most of the current planetary warming. Human-caused global warming is often called anthropogenic climate change.
- Industrialization, deforestation, and pollution have greatly increased atmospheric concentrations of water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, all greenhouse gases that help trap heat near Earth's surface. (See an interactive feature on how global warming works.)
- Humans are pouring carbon dioxide into the atmosphere much faster than plants and oceans can absorb it.
- These gases persist in the atmosphere for years, meaning that even if such emissions were eliminated today, it would not immediately stop global warming.

WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN?

A follow-up report by the IPCC released in April 2007 warned that global warming could lead to large-scale food and water shortages and have catastrophic effects on wildlife.

- Sea level could rise between 7 and 23 inches (18 to 59 centimeters) by century's end, the IPCC's February 2007 report projects. Rises of just 4 inches (10 centimeters) could flood many South Seas islands and swamp large parts of Southeast Asia.
- Strong hurricanes, droughts, heat waves, wildfires, and other natural disasters may become commonplace in many parts of the world. The growth of deserts may also cause food shortages in many places.
- The ocean's circulation system, known as the ocean conveyor belt, could be permanently altered, causing a mini-ice age in Western Europe and other rapid changes.
- At some point in the future, warming could become uncontrollable by creating a so-called positive feedback effect. Rising temperatures could release additional greenhouse gases by unlocking methane in permafrost and undersea deposits, freeing carbon trapped in sea ice, and causing increased evaporation of water. ☐

Source: National Geographic News
Updated June 14, 2007

REMEMBERING JAMES JOINER

This issue wishes to pay tribute to a past editor of the *MV Kit* (now *Youth Ministry Accent*), James Lawrence Joiner. James joined the world headquarters MV staff as assistant secretary and Kit editor on November 1, 1969.

James was managing editor of *Kit* during part of his six years on the editorial staff at southern Publishing Association in Nashville, 1957 – 1963. There he served as associate editor of *These Times* and also for a time as associate book editor.

From Southern Publishing he was called to New York as Faith for Today's editor of publications and director of public relations. In 1964 he joined the staff of the Review and Herald Publishing Association and served as associate editor of *The Youth's Instructor* until his call to the General Conference.

Born in Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1932, at age two, James was featured in the Knoxville newspaper highlighting his unusual abilities, most notably spelling words such as Mississippi, hippopotamus, and chrysanthemum. He entered first grade at age 7, but was immediately transferred to fourth grade. He graduated as valedictorian at age 15 from Farragut High School in Knoxville. He earned a B.A. degree from Southern Missionary College in 1953 and an M.A. from the University of Tennessee in 1954. At SMC he edited the college yearbook his junior year and the school paper his senior year.

James' book, *These Were the Courageous*, contains sketches of early Adventist leaders along with color portraits of each by Russ Harlan.

James married a fellow college graduate, Mable Mitchell, and together they had two daughters, Rebecca and Sharon. Both girls were born while he was assistant editor of *These Times* magazine, Southern Publishing Association in Nashville. Mable preceded James in death in 1989.

James continued as editor and writer in denominational employment with Faith for today television show in Brooklyn, NY, the Review and Herald Publishing Association and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Church World headquarters in Maryland, and the Philippine Publishing House in Manila. After mission service he returned to the same position at the General Conference and remained there until retirement in 1994, with 37-plus years of service to the Church.

Jim married Beverley Sauder Teixeira in 1990. He delighted taking her with him around the world, showing her places he had already travelled. ☐



JAMES L. JOINER
Editor
Youth Ministry Accent
Assistant Youth Director
1969 - 1972

Since the fall of man nature can not reveal a perfect knowledge of God; for sin has brought a blight upon it, and has intervened between nature and nature's God. Had man never disobeyed his Creator, had he remained in his state of perfect rectitude, nature would never have been marred by sin, and it would thus have revealed to man the perfection of the character of God. But when man disobeyed God, when he ate of the tree of knowledge, he united with the apostate leader, and separated himself from the knowledge of God (*The General Conference Daily Bulletin*, March 6, 1899, par. 1).

When Adam and Eve listened to the voice of the tempter, they sinned against God. The light, the garments of heavenly innocence, departed from these deceived souls, and they drew about themselves the dark robes of ignorance of God. The clear and perfect light of innocence which had hitherto surrounded them had lightened everything which they approached; but deprived of that heavenly light,

the posterity of Adam could no longer perfectly trace the character of God in his created works (*GCDB*, March 6, 1899, par. 2).

After the fall, the things of nature could not fully teach the lesson of the great and marvelous love of God. Therefore the Father sent his well-beloved Son into the world, and declared him to be a perfect revelation of himself to man. In order that the world might not remain in darkness, in eternal, spiritual night, the God of nature met in Jesus Christ. He was "that true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (*GCDB*, March 6, 1899, par. 3).

The most difficult and humiliating lesson that man has to learn, if he is kept by the power of God, is his own inefficiency, and the sure failure of his own efforts to read nature correctly. Sin has obscured his vision, so that, of himself, man can not interpret nature without placing it above God. He is in the same position as were the Athenians who erected their altars for the worship of nature, upon which

they might well inscribe, "To the unknown God." Nature is not God, and never was God. The voice of nature testifies of God, declaring his glory; but nature itself is not God. As God's created work, it but bears a testimony of his power (*GCDB*, March 6, 1899, par. 4).

The ancient philosophers prided themselves upon their superior knowledge, but God has said of them: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. . . . Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever" (*GCDB*, March 6, 1899, par. 5).

Christ came to the world as a personal Saviour. He represented a personal God. He ascended on high as a personal Saviour, and he will come again as he ascended to heaven, a personal Saviour. We need carefully to consider this; for in their

human wisdom, the wise men of the world, knowing not God, foolishly deify nature and the laws of nature. Those who have not a knowledge of God by their acceptance of the revelation God has made of himself in Christ, will obtain only an imperfect knowledge of God in nature. Those who think they can obtain a perfect knowledge of God, aside from the Representative whom the Word declares is the "express image of his person," will need to become fools in their own estimation before they can be wise. This knowledge, so far from giving elevated conceptions of God, so far from elevating the mind, the soul, the heart, and bringing the whole being into conformity to the will of God, will make men idolaters (*GCDB*, March 6, 1899, par. 6).

Though it is impossible to gain a perfect knowledge of God from imperfect nature; yet the things of nature, marred though they be, inculcate truths regarding the skilful Master Artist. One omnipotent in power, great in goodness, in mercy, and love, has created the earth; and even in its blighted state, much that is beautiful remains. Nature's voice speaks, saying that there is a God, the Creator of nature. Nature in its imperfections can not fully represent God; it can not reveal the character of God in his moral perfection (*GCDB*, March 6, 1899, par. 7).

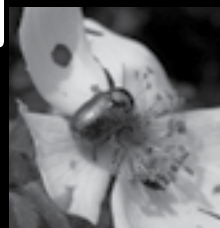
It was for the purpose of giving to man a perfect representation of the character of God that Jesus came to our earth. He said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me. . . . Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork, but Philip could not accept nature as his God. "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." We are to behold the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ. In the person of his only begotten Son, the God of heaven has condescended to stoop to our human nature. The Father in heaven has a voice and a person which Christ expressed. Those who have a true knowledge of God will not become so infatuated with the laws of matter and the operations of nature as to overlook or to refuse to acknowledge the continual working of God in nature. Deity is the author of nature. The natural world has in itself no inherent power but that which God supplies. How strange, then; that so many make a deity of nature! God furnishes the matter and the properties with which to carry out his plans. Nature is but his agency (*GCDB*, March 6, 1899, par. 8).

The hand of God is continually guiding the globe in its continuous march around the sun. The same hand which holds the mountains, and balances them in positions, guides and keeps in order the respective planets. All the wonderful glories in the heavens are but doing their appointed work. Vegetation flourishes because of the agencies employed by the great and mighty God. He sends the dew and the rain and the sunshine, that verdure may spring forth, and spread its green carpet over the earth, that the shrubs and the fruit-trees may bud and blossom and bring forth fruit. It is not to be supposed that a law is set in operation for the seed to work of itself, that the leaf appears because it must do so of itself. It is through the immediate agency of God that every tiny seed breaks through the earth, and springs into life. Every green leaf grows, every flower blooms, through the working power of God (*GCDB*, March 6, 1899, par. 9).

The physical organism of God is under the supervision of God; but it is not like a clock that is set in operation, and must go of itself. The heart beats, pulse succeeds pulse, breath succeeds breath; but the being is under the supervision of God. Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. In God we live and move and have our being.


THE TRUE RELATION of GOD and NATURE

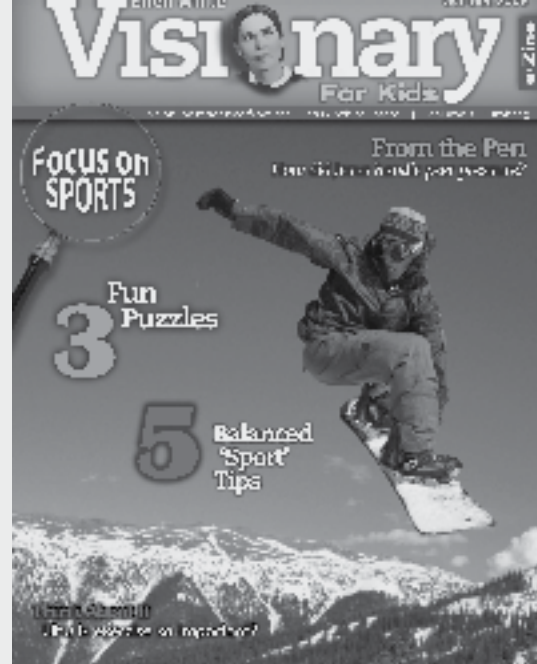
Ellen G. White • March 6, 1899 • Special Testimonies



Each heart beat, each breath, is the inspiration of that God who breathed into the nostrils of Adam the breath of life, the inspiration of the ever-present God, the great I AM (GCDB, March 6, 1899, par. 10).

Idolatry of nature is a farce; it is the invention of men who know not God, and who are trying to keep out of sight a knowledge of the true God. The words of Holy Writ say nothing of the independent laws of nature. They teach us that God is the superintendent as well as the Creator of all things. The divine Being is engaged in upholding the things which he has created. God has laws which he has instituted; but they are only his servants, through which he effects results. It is God who calls everything into order, and keeps all things in motion (GCDB, arch 6, 1899, par. 11).

We may look up, through nature, to nature's God. The beautiful things of nature have been given us for our pleasure. Then let us not turn our blessings into a curse by being led away from God in the worship of the creature rather than the Creator. Let nature's beautiful ministers of love answer the purpose of God, drawing our hearts to him to adore his goodness, his compassion, his inexpressible love, and to be filled with the beauties of his character (GCDB, March 6, 1899, par. 12). 



AN ONLINE MAGAZINE FOR YOUTH

from the Ellen G. White[©] Estate

Ellen White Visionary for Kids, (Ve.Z) is an electronic magazine produced quarterly by the White Estate for kids ages 8-14. Fantastic for family worships, Pathfinder devotionals, Bible classes, Sabbath school enrichment programs or personal study.

Each issue focuses on an important topic that Adventist kids can use to grow socially, mentally and spiritually.

Every featured article is kid-friendly and full of Adventist heritage stories, facts of interest, pictures, stories authored by youth, a question-and-answer corner, as well as puzzles, mazes, and other interactive-learning activities. Kids who e-mail Visionary their own stories, artwork or puzzles can receive \$25 if their work is published. Visit the Web Site for submission guidelines.

Dr. Cindy Tutsch, Editor-in-Chief of Visionary, recently stated that for 2009 Ve.Z will undergo some major improvements. She said, "... When 8-14 year olds visit our site we want it to be easily accessible, friendly and full of relevant Christian information. We want it to help kids understand who Ellen White really was and her relevance to their young lives. Adventist pioneer stories will also reveal how growing up Adventist can help junior-aged youth discover their own Adventist identity."

So visit Ve.Z today at www.whiteestate.org/vez.

readIT : book info

In the pages of **CHERISH THE GIFT**, pastors and lay leaders will find practical ideas and timely information in this hands-on guide to environmental stewardship for the church.

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A uniquely user-friendly guide to environmental theory and action

"A useful book for the budding or seasoned environmentalist."
— Booklist

Available at: www.adventistbookcenter.com or amazon.com



ACCENT : resource for Adventist Youth Leaders

Euro-Africa Division Youth Ministries and Education Departments
AMICUS INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CONGRESS



a report by corrado cozzi
YOUTH MINISTRIES DIRECTOR, EURO-AFRICA DIVISION



“Warming Up” was the theme of the 4th International AMiCUS Congress organized by the Education and Youth Ministries departments of the Euro-Africa Division.

The organizers used the term “Warming Up” to bring attention to the issue of climate change and the associated problems that are now destabilizing our planet.

The meetings were held on September 25-28, 2008, at the Romanian Theological Seminary² in Bucharest, Romania. Almost 400 university students from different European countries attended this congress. Six speakers presented their lectures through plenary sessions and workshops.

The main purpose of the Congress was mainly to present to the youth, in an urgent manner, threats to the environment due to the *warming up* of the planet; and offer suggestions on how to give their own contribution through a practical, caring attitude.

This article is not intended as a mere report of the event, but a way to make youth more aware and encourage as many youth as possible to commit personally in order to contribute seriously to save our planet. *Is it possible to achieve this goal?* The worthy, personal answer should be: **what can I do in my little “world”?** This is a good starting point. The lecturers at this AMiCUS Congress gave us simple but precious tips to give effective contributions in our daily lives.

The Earth belongs to God, don't forget it.

“Today nature is mainly studied from three view points of interest: technological, economical and ecological. But there is room also for looking at nature from a spiritual perspective”, affirmed Dr. A. Cremades, rector at Sagunto College, Spain. This perspective should invite us to reflect seriously that we are “occupying” a land that does not belong to us. It was lent to us by God since the beginning of time, and we are “using” it

in inappropriate ways. Several times Cremades quoted Ellen G. White, who through her writings invited us to consider creation as humankind's lesson book.³ She wrote: “The earth is now marred and defiled by sin. Yet even in its blighted state much that is beautiful remains. God's object lessons are not obliterated; rightly understood, nature speaks of her Creator.”⁴ Looking around us we can easily confirm this axiom. Despite its manifold pollution, we can learn the secret of life and the *miracle* of nature's regenerative power when we allow it. In fact, according to the Gaia Hypothesis of Lovelock, the planet Earth as a whole is a complete unity of life, a higher level of biological organization, a complete system whose different parts interact with each other and influence one another as a unit. Something like a living super organism capable of auto-regulating itself and keeping itself in good conditions favouring life.⁵ This wonderful reality helps us to grasp the existence of God as Creator and consequently the call to respect His creation.⁶

The first lesson we can learn is that it is not enough to affirm that we believe in creation, but much more to confirm practically and through actions that we are creationists and it is our spiritual duty to care about God's creation.

Is the warming up of the planet a sign of the end?

“As Adventists we are entitled to give an answer,” affirms Dr. H. Gerhardt, Rector of Friedensau University, Germany. He continued to say that “since we are specialists of the end times and the pre-advent scenario—specialists for the signs of the times.”

To a similar question asked by His disciples, Jesus focused His answer not on the historical, social, atmospheric, physical manifestations produced directly or indirectly by humankind, but on the *only* sign of the

time, that is “the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven.”⁷ So, can we consider the warming up a sign of the end? Not clearly in the light of Jesus’ eschatology, but it is still a sign, “a sign of a planet suffering from human irresponsibility, ignorance, and unbridled greed for money and power,” argued Gerhard. And he continues, “When Jesus talks about the end of this world and of the new world to come, He paints two pictures for his anxious disciples to see (Matt. 24-25). The first is a picture of chaos and the second one of serenity and tranquillity. The message of the first picture is: do not be afraid, do not speculate, do not force God’s time into yours, or limit your faith—don’t make it dependent on political or ecological affairs. Just stay cool. In the second picture the message is: do not be self-secured. Do not give up your hopes and dreams. Do not live according to the motto: tomorrow we are dead. Do not act irresponsibly. Just stay warm in your hopes and dreams. Live a responsible, caring life.”

Without a doubt we are living the last chapter of history, and all events affecting the world in this time could be considered as predictors of the end. How should we react? Paul gave us an interesting input on how-to-live in the time of the end: be happy in the Lord; be good to all people; don’t be consumed by sorrow and burdens; the peace of God, which

is higher than any human reasoning, will safeguard your hearts and souls in Jesus Christ.⁸

A second lesson we can hold is that as “prophets” of God we have the task of transmitting the value of life and calling mankind to make things right with Him, with our fellow men and with creation.

Should we preserve biodiversity?

In this context of global warming, it is useful to pay some attention to biodiversity, to the variety of life forms such as plants, animals, micro-organisms, etc. Today, biodiversity is threatened by destruction, says Dr. Jacques Sauvagnat, director of the Geoscience Research Institute, European Branch. Besides habitat destruction (deforestation, extensive agriculture, urbanization, pollution), there is global warming. High percentages of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, freshwater fishes, and butterfly species are disappearing every day. In addition to these natural concerns, there is a spiritual implication. In fact, quoting E.O. Wilson, Sauvagnat highlights the important role of religion in preserving creation. “If religion and science could be united on the common ground of biological conservation, the problem would soon be solved. I’m puzzled that so many religious leaders have

hesitated to make protection of Creation an important issue of their magisterium. Do they believe that human-centred ethics and preparation for after-life are the only things that matter? Even more perplexing is the widespread conviction among Christians that the Second Coming is imminent, and therefore the condition is of little consequence. To protect the beauty of the earth and of its prodigious variety of life forms should be a common goal, regardless of our differences in our metaphysical beliefs”⁹.

Third lesson: to include climate change issues at the top of our religious ministry.

Climate change and the Christian’s response

“Climate change is not only real but occurring more rapidly than previously thought. There is overwhelming evidences that humans are affecting the global climate.” With these words, presented by Dr. Samuel Soret, associate professor and chairman of the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health at Loma Linda University (LLU), California, USA, we enter into a more technical aspect of the congress’ topics. Climate change is the technical term scientists use to define global warming.

Mobilization
reinforces our status
as Ambassadors
of redemption by
developing and
implementing a tangible
agenda that leads us
to become a godly and
green community of
believers. It is necessary
to start at the local level.

It is my belief that all of us are able to observe for ourselves the serious consequences of climate change, thanks to the continuous attention given by the mass media worldwide. We know about the threats of the rising sea level because of the melting of the polar glaciers, but also by the warming of the water. Whole islands are under this threat to disappear under the inexorable rising of the sea. We are made aware of the pending and sometimes complete extinction of



Participants of the 4th International AMiCUS¹ Congress organized by the Education and Youth Ministries departments of the Euro-Africa Division.

certain species as a consequence of rapid, drastic ecosystem disruption; the rising periodicity of storms, and typhoons, demolishing entire regions of the earth, sowing disaster and death. We know the impacts of global warming on economy and on health. But, to list all these facts and recognize them as consequences of our lack of responsibility to manage God’s property is no longer a novelty. What is our responsibility to cope with these problems? It is true that we are not able to give all

the expected answers to this global-warming up problem, but in almost all areas we can do something concretely. Soret, as a public health scientist, focuses his interest on one of the not-so-well-known aspects of the climate change: the human health impact. That means direct influence on food and water supplies, infectious diseases, weather extremes producing death, dangerous air pollution, severity of droughts, vector and water-borne diseases, malnutrition,

growing human vulnerability, and so on. In the face of these first-health-impacts of global warming there are approaches that can create a solution. Bio energy is one of these, applied mainly to reducing pollutant technology effects. But this apparently “green” solution raises an important ethical implication. Soret argues that “not only is the health burden from climate change itself among the world’s poor the heaviest, but some of the major mitigation approaches to reduce the degree of warming may produce negative side effects disproportionately among the poor. For example, competition for land to grow bio fuels creates pressure on food prices. Of course, in today’s globalized world, eventually all nations will share some risk, but underserved populations will suffer first and most strongly from climate change. In terms of absolute burden of disease, climate change threatens first of all the poorest and most vulnerable in all societies, closely in inverse proportion to income, wealth, and power. The rich will find a world becoming more and more expensive, inconvenient, uncomfortable, disrupted, and colorless; in general more unpleasant and unpredictable, perhaps greatly so. The poor will die!” The paradox is that the countries that are less responsible for climate change are the most struck by the consequences of it. Children are also highly impacted.

Facing this alarming situation the question could be, “Is there an solution?” The answer seems to be yes, and Soret led us to a responsible reflection on it, from an Adventist perspective.¹⁰

The starting point is God. We have to admit that, above and first of all, this environmental crisis has been created because we “disconnected” from the “Power.” This is a spiritual problem and the church is expected to find ways to cope with it. We have a strong humanitarian agency with ADRA, and an impressive network of health care, but nothing or very little as political strategies to face environmental issues. Why? Maybe because we do not consider the earth a “sacred enough” place to worship God—with reverence outside of the “sacred” walls of the church. Paul simply affirms that whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.¹¹ How can we glorify God in anything outside the church context? Paul was not referring to contemplative worship. Another point of view!

Soret highlights Psalm 148 as an example of how creation predisposes us to worship God. Our duty is to be in tune with this harmony. But some may argue that God ordered us in Genesis 1 to “dominate” the earth, so we are authorized to steward it according to our wishes. An easy conclusion, but not God’s. God empowered us

to lead nature as “choirmasters” in order to perform the worthy worship attitude God deserves. Somewhere we declined this role, and the results are evident.¹² God called us to be responsible consumers, as Jesus was. He worked, He ate, He drank, He lived simply in a balanced life utilizing the products of nature, but doing all respecting what He created, using only what was necessary to live. In fact, according to Soret, consumerism is a spiritual problem.

So, at this stage of the problem, which could be our most helpful reaction? There are three practical axioms of an Adventist response to the climate change: preparedness, reflection and implication, and mobilization.¹³

Preparedness consists of building relationships and collaborative networks with local, national and international agencies and organizations in charge of addressing the human health consequences of climate change. Preparedness enhances our ability to respond to environmental and humanitarian crises and facilitates our involvement in recovery efforts.

Reflection and implication is a normal act of responsibility that all Christians are called to practice. It is unacceptable to be at the window just watching what is happening under our eyes. If we are creationists we have to get personally involved in

a process of reflection to “save the earth” as several non-confessional agencies are already doing.

Mobilization reinforces our status as Ambassadors of redemption by developing and implementing a tangible agenda that leads us to become a godly and green community of believers. It is necessary to start at the local level. Teaching and preaching, programming meetings and conferences on this climate change issue in the places we call our home are important. Resources could be provided, but the Internet offers a huge amount of information to animate such meetings. We prepare impressive “Health Expo” material to animate programs to inform how to care at the best health personal patrimony. What if we organize a “Climate Change Expo” to inform in a practical way how we could act to show we care, at best, for God’s patrimony?

Yes, one of the most useful answers to the climate change and other environmental challenges of this century, is a church responding to this issue by simply being the community it’s called to be. Do we have any other response to the invitation of Jesus to be the light of the world?

Goodbye good-buy.

Remaining on this trend of practical suggestions to make us more aware of our commitment in a solving-process strategy, Dr. Michael Pearson, rector of Newbold College, England, invites us to reflect on connections between climate change and personal shopping habits, developing an ethical and responsible consumerism.

By “ethical shopping” Pearson refers to the impact that our shopping behavior can have in regard to respecting the environment, i.e., buying less in order to waste fewer natural resources; buying locally to avoid long distance

transportation; buying fair trade products to avoid any kind of exploitation; fostering better work conditions in countries of production; boycotting products of companies that mistreat people or the environment; boycotting products coming from parts of the world where there is extreme political and social injustice. Interesting perspectives, isn’t it?

We ought to be aware that “we should buy” products instead of “being bought” by them. Are we sure that we need all we buy? It is not a sort of moralization. Former generations didn’t pay attention to “unfair trade,” unlimited purchasing, running for the progress, and so on, and producing in creating the phenomenon of consumerism. But every cause has its effect, and climate change is the most uncomfortable proof. We can change this trend. An ethical awareness applied to our shopping habits can contribute largely toward a solution for global warming.

The invitation is: to buy biodegradable soap for washing (including for the body); to avoid waste by buying only what we really need; to avoid products coming from countries that do not respect the environment (and children!); to buy just enough food for family sustenance (a large amount of food is thrown away everyday because it is out-dated!); and to buy simply and live simply.

Ethical shopping, argues Pearson, means that we will use our influence, small but real, to try to “do justice, love, mercy, and walk humbly before our God.”

Conclusion

I have no conclusion other than this: To get up and do our best to continue the job description God gave us in Eden in order to care for His creation. And remember: He never ordered us to stop. Never!

THE STARTING POINT IS GOD.

WINDOW 1:

Statement on stewardship of creation

In the light of the teaching of the Bible, the inspired counsels of Ellen G. White, the scientific data, and philosophical and theological reflections assembled together in this Congress,

We commit ourselves:

To affirm our commitment to God the Creator and Sustainer within the context of our Christian mission, the Three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14 and daily Christian discipleship.

To affirm that full redemption includes the creation and therefore that Christians should also demonstrate in their lives that their relation with nature has also been restored.

To recognize that the goal for ecology is the restoration of the Eden ideal, healing our fractured relationships with God, within ourselves, with each other and with nature.

To study and respect nature, the second book of God, in the light of the Bible, following the example of Jesus, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

To integrate the principle of stewardship of nature in Christian education given at home, in the church, and in our schools in order to reach and inspire future generations.

To preach and teach more about the care of creation, in our Bible studies, in our evangelistic meetings, and in our every day lives.

To practice consistently the health and lifestyle principles of the SDA church, including the promotion of a vegetarian diet.

To keep working for an intelligent awareness of practical and concrete ways in which to respect nature: in the use of energy, transportation, recycling waste, care for water, air and soil, plants and animals, and in our shopping habits.

To engage ourselves in caring for creation by promoting healing and by supporting ecological actions within the community where we live.

To promote the ideal that our homes, churches, institutions and enterprises be as intentionally green as possible, and even the greenest in the community.

To extend the kingdom of God on this earth and to persevere in the stewardship of creation, while awaiting full redemption for ourselves and for our world on the New Earth.

WINDOW 2:

Things to do for better care of our earth ... starting at home!

1. You can save thousands of kilograms of carbon dioxide per year by recycling just half of your household waste.

2. Use less hot water by installing a low flow showerhead.

3. Lowering your thermostat just 2 degrees in winter and raising it by 2 degrees in summer saves approximately 1,000 kg of Carbon dioxide (CO₂).

4. Simply by turning off your television, DVD player, stereo, and computer when you are not using them will save a lot of energy.

Furthermore:

- a. Put all computer devices in power-save mode
- b. Use multiple plugs in electrical outlets

5. Simply unplug all household machines (water heater, washing machine, dishwasher, etc.) after use.

6. Unplug the charger of cell phones, MP3, players, organizers, Walkman, electric razor, and any other devices that need chargers. The standby mode uses 10% of normal power when devices are on.

7. Use as few plastic bags as possible for your daily purchases. Utilize a reusable/recyclable bag.

8. Turn off the water faucet when brushing your teeth. You can save up to three litres of water daily.

9. Don't throw away batteries/akkus in regular trash-cans. Use the specific baskets provided in different places in your city or in stores.

10. Use paper reasonably. In one year, a normal use of paper means the cutting of one tree per person.

HEALTHY HABITS

Changes in the way you eat can bring big health benefits—and more enjoyment—to your table.

HEALTHY HABIT:

Eat Plenty of Produce and Whole Grains

Countries known for putting it into practice: *China and Greece*

In many countries, meat is a garnish. The traditional Chinese diet, for example, consists primarily of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. And in Greece, "vegetables and legumes are main meals, not just side dishes," says Antonia Trichopoulou, M.D., Ph.D., professor at the University of Athens Medical School and director of the World Health Organization's Collaborating Center of Nutrition.

Research finds that three servings or more a day of produce can lower the risk of stroke, heart disease, and some cancers. Harvard University's Nurses Health Study, for example, which examined almost 85,000 women over 12 to 14 years, found that those who ate the most fruit and vegetables had a 20 percent lower risk for heart disease. The new USDA guidelines recommend we eat between five and 13 servings of fruit and vegetables a day, and we're starting to hear the message. The average American consumed roughly 332 pounds of fresh produce in 2004, up from 287 pounds in 1990. Plus, with the growth of America's farmers' markets, the introduction of Consumer Supported Agriculture, where community members buy produce from local farmers each month, and home delivery from many supermarkets, opportunities for Americans to have fresh produce abound.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Try to fill two-thirds of your plate with produce and whole-grain foods, and the remaining third with fish or meat, Montignac says. Also, challenge yourself to put as many colors as possible into your meal. Or go on a fruit exploration: Try one new type of fruit from your local market each week. In summer, freeze some of your new favorites for a frosty after-dinner treat.

Source: <http://www.cookinglight.com>

WINDOW 3: Was Ellen G. White Green?

This intriguing question was answered by Dr. Cindy Tutsch, Associate director, Ellen G. White Estate, one of the lecturers at the EUD AMiCUS Congress.

She argues that although Ellen White lived most of her life in the nineteenth century before plastics were invented, before nuclear power, before nitrates and anthropogenic chemicals contaminated our rivers and streams, and before greed for oil drove much of the world's ethos, she nonetheless was a strong advocate for care of the earth.

Mrs. White took a wholistic approach to her life and mission. Thus, for her, care for the earth was not a distraction from care for the soul. Indeed, in her worldview, the soul itself is nourished through the beauty of God's created world. She stated: "Jesus came to this earth to accomplish the greatest work ever accomplished among men. He came as God's ambassador, to show us how to live so as to secure life's best results. What were the conditions chosen by the Infinite Father for His Son? A secluded home in the Galilean hills; . . . the quiet of dawn or twilight in the green valley; the holy ministries of nature; the study of creation and providence;

and the soul's communion with God—these were the conditions and opportunities of the early life of Jesus" (*Adventist Home*, p. 32).

Growing food for the family was not the sole reason Ellen White spoke of the advantages of country living. In her view, children who have the opportunity to garden, care for animals, and watch the wonders of nature in a beautiful setting experience both educational and spiritual advantages (*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 195). "God loves the beautiful. He has clothed the earth and the heavens with beauty and with a Father's joy, He watches the delight of His children in the things that He has made. He desires us to surround our homes with the beauty of natural things" (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 370).

Probably none of Ellen White's counsel is as "green" as her advocacy for a vegetarian diet. None only does practicing vegetarianism result in better health, it could also help to save animals and the earth! "Animals are often transported long distances and subjected to great suffering in reaching a market. Taken from the green pastures, and traveling for weary miles over the hot, dusty roads, or crowded

into filthy (trains or trucks), feverish and exhausted, often for many hours deprived of food and water, the poor creatures are driven to their death, that human beings may feast on the carcasses" (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 314).

Meatless meals provide a viable answer to feeding the world's hungry through more efficient use of grains and other crops. Meatless meals also conserve vital but limited freshwater, fertile topsoil, as well as preserving irreplaceable ecosystems such as rainforests and other wildlife habitats. Meatless meals also help decrease greenhouse gases that are accelerating climate change.

Ellen White recognized the need of pure water and air. "The precious things of the valley are nourished from these everlasting mountains. The Alps of Europe are its glory. The treasures of the hills send their blessings to millions. We see numerous cataracts rushing from the tops of the mountains into the valleys beneath" (3 *Manuscript Release*, p. 215).

Though Ellen White doesn't directly address the problem of the pollution of rivers, streams, lakes, and oceans, she does so indirectly when she states: "Thousands have died for want of pure water, and pure air, who

WINDOW 3: Was Ellen White Green? (cont'd)

might have lived" (*Selected Messages*, Vol 2, p 456).

Regarding pollution, Ellen White wrote: "The physical surroundings in the cities are often a peril to health. The constant liability to contact with disease, the prevalence of foul air, impure water, impure food, the crowded, dark, unhealthful dwellings, are some of the evils to be met" (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 365).

"Perfect cleanliness, plenty of sunlight, careful attention to sanitation in every detail . . . are essential to freedom from disease. . . . Death-producing germs abound in dark, neglected corners, in decaying refuse, in dampness and mold and must" (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 276). "From the standpoint of health and the smoke and dust of the cities are very objectionable." (*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 82)

Tutsch also reports that Ellen White was a recycler! She enjoyed making rag carpets from much worn clothing and neatly and carefully patched her family's clothes to extend their wear. Her granddaughter Ella recalls Ellen urging husband James to not throw out a glass bottle. When he did anyway, Mrs. White chided, "Oh James! You could have at least kept the cork!" "Nothing that can be utilized

should be thrown away" (*Child Guidance* p. 135). "To be wasteful of time or material is dishonesty before God." (*Testimonies*, Vol. 4 p. 451). "He who had all resources at His command gives a lesson that not a fragment should be wasted. He who has plenty should not waste. Let nothing be wasted that can do good to any one. Collect every fragment, for someone will need it" (*Welfare Ministry*, p. 154).

Ellen White links ecology to the gospel commission, including what we eat, how we travel, spend our money, even how we restore misused land. It was God's plan for His people, anciently and currently, to teach all nations how to care for the earth properly and how to be free from disease, thus pointing to the Creator as the source of health, beauty, and joy. Anything the Christian does toward the improvement of humanity's ecological environment provides greater opportunity for also improving humanity physically and spiritually. Notice the purpose for ecological renewal:


"Through [God's people] the Lord designed to teach all the nations of the world how to cultivate the soil so that it would yield healthy fruit, free from disease . . . Those who cultivated

the soil were to realize that they were doing God service. They were as truly in their lot and place as were the men appointed to minister in the priesthood." (*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1112).

In recent years there has been a proliferation of research showing the moral development potential of the natural world. Ellen White believed that nature provided opportunities to learn and deepen spiritual values if we are intentional in pointing to God as nature's Creator. (*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 376, 377; *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 54, 55) Thus, ecology is not an end in itself. An unspoiled environment points to a God who delights in the beautiful. Adam and Eve lost their perfect Eden environment because of sin. We are again losing our environment because of the sins of materialism, greed, pollution, and utter disregard of the earth's resources and beauty.

The Christian should not only look forward to the final restoration of earth to its original Eden state, but must also honor God today by taking responsible care of Planet Earth (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 59). ◻

(ENDNOTES)

- 1 AMiCUS is the Adventist Ministry to College and University Students.
- 2 Adventist Theological Institute, Cernica, Romania, www.institutadventist.ro.
- 3 E. G. White, *Education*, p.20-26.
- 4 E. G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 18.
- 5 Gaia Hypothesis: First articulated by British atmospheric chemist James Lovelock, the Gaia hypothesis succinctly suggests that the Earth is a self-regulating, self-sustaining entity, which continually adjusts its environment in order to support life. See www.crosscurrents.org/Gaia.htm.
- 6 For a deeper reflection, Cremades invites people to consider the *teleology* point of view of nature, "as the oldest of the demonstration of the existence of God, the easiest to understand, the one that produces with the greatest facility in any spirit the elevation towards the Absolute." See González Ángel L. *Teología Natural*, (1991), pp 157-160.
- 7 See Matthew 24, 25.
- 8 Philippians 4, 4-7.
- 9 E. O. Wilson, *The Creation: An Appeal to Save Life on Earth*, (2006).
- 10 He suggests to consult Edward Brown, *Our Father's World: Mobilizing the Church to Care for Creation*.
- 11 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17.
- 12 This "choirmaster" paradigm is a very interesting picture suggested by Soret.
- 13 Always suggested by Soret.
- 14 This window is a summary of Cindy Tutsch's presentation. 

TOP 10 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO REDUCE GLOBAL WARMING

Source : <http://environment.about.com/od/globalwarming/tp/globalwarm-tips.htm>

1. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Do your part to reduce waste by choosing reusable products instead of disposables. Buying products with minimal packaging (including the economy size when that makes sense for you) will help to reduce waste. And whenever you can, recycle paper, plastic, newspaper, glass and aluminum cans. If there isn't a recycling program at your workplace, school, or in your community, ask about starting one. By recycling half of your household waste, you can save 2,400 pounds of carbon dioxide annually.

2. Use Less Heat and Air Conditioning

Adding insulation to your walls and attic, and installing weather stripping or caulking around doors and windows can lower your heating costs more than 25 percent, by reducing the amount of energy you need to heat and cool your home. Turn down the heat while you're sleeping at night or away during the day, and keep temperatures moderate at all times. Setting your thermostat just 2 degrees lower in winter and higher in summer could save about 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide each year.

3. Change a Light Bulb

Wherever practical, replace regular light bulbs with compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs. Replacing just one 60-watt incandescent light bulb with a CFL will save you \$30 over the life of the bulb. CFLs also last 10 times longer than incandescent bulbs, use two-thirds less energy, and give off 70 percent less heat. If every U.S. family replaced one regular light bulb with a CFL, it would eliminate 90 billion pounds of greenhouse gases, the same as taking 7.5 million cars off the road.

4. Drive Less and Drive Smart

Less driving means fewer emissions. Besides saving gasoline, walking and biking are great forms of exercise. Explore your community's mass transit system, and check out options for carpooling to work or school. When you do drive, make sure your car is running efficiently. For example, keeping your tires properly inflated can improve your gas mileage by more than 3 percent. Every gallon of gas you save not only helps your budget, it also keeps 20 pounds of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

5. Buy Energy-Efficient Products

When it's time to buy a new car, choose one that offers good gas mileage. Home appliances now come in a range of energy-efficient models, and compact fluorescent bulbs are designed to provide more natural-looking light while using far less energy than standard light bulbs.

Avoid products that come with excess packaging, especially molded plastic and other packaging that can't be recycled. If you reduce your household garbage by 10 percent, you can save 1,200 pounds of carbon dioxide annually.

6. Use Less Hot Water

Set your water heater at 120 degrees to save energy, and wrap it in an insulating blanket if it is more than 5 years old. Buy low-flow showerheads to save hot water and about 350 pounds of carbon dioxide yearly. Wash your clothes in warm or cold water to reduce your use of hot water and the energy required to produce it. That change alone can save at least 500 pounds of carbon dioxide annually in most households. Use the energy-saving settings on your dishwasher and let the dishes air-dry.

7. Use the "Off" Switch

Save electricity and reduce global warming by turning off lights when you leave a room, and using only as much light as you need. And remember to turn off your television, video player, stereo and computer when you're not using them.

It's also a good idea to turn off the water when you're not using it. While brushing your teeth, shampooing the

dog or washing your car, turn off the water until you actually need it for rinsing. You'll reduce your water bill and help to conserve a vital resource.

8. Plant a Tree

If you have the means to plant a tree, start digging. During photosynthesis, trees and other plants absorb carbon dioxide and give off oxygen. They are an integral part of the natural atmospheric exchange cycle here on Earth, but there are too few of them to fully counter the increases in carbon dioxide caused by automobile traffic, manufacturing and other human activities. A single tree will absorb approximately one ton of carbon dioxide during its lifetime.

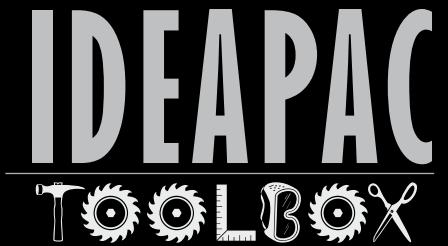
9. Get a Report Card from Your Utility Company

Many utility companies provide free home energy audits to help consumers identify areas in their homes that may not be energy efficient. In addition, many utility companies offer rebate programs to help pay for the cost of energy-efficient upgrades.

10. Encourage Others to Conserve

Share information about recycling and energy conservation with your friends, neighbors and co-workers, and take opportunities to encourage public officials to establish programs and policies that are good for the environment.

These 10 steps will take you a long way toward reducing your energy use and your monthly budget. And less energy use means less dependence on the fossil fuels that create greenhouse gases and contribute to global warming.



INSIDE THIS KIT

2009 Starter Kit/Discussion, pp.26 - 28

Discussion/Great Ideas, pp.27-31

Stewards of the Earth
What We Take For Granted
A Matching Game
Interview
Thought-Provoking
Heavy-Weight Thoughts about God
A Real Life Story
Prayer for a Deeper Faith
New Year Resolve
Sing 'n Tell

Skits, 36 - 44

Environment:

Saving our environment, 25
Taking care of God's world, 26
Pollution in God's world, 26

Global Warming:

Thinking of others, 27
Are we murdering the earth, 28
Thinking of others, 29

Eating Disorders:

Taking Care of Our bodies, 30
How we view our bodies, 31
Our Lifestyle, 31
Honoring God with our bodies, 32

2009 STARTER KIT IDEAS

*This year, our goal is to challenge youth to shine and share the light God has placed in their hearts.
The dark world is waiting for the light of God's love.*

Q1: SHINING FOR GOD

something to do

- Invite members of your group to find or create a series of skits depicting the various methods Christ used to touch the lives of those around Him.
- Perform these skits for your church family, explaining why you're studying this particular aspect of Christ's life and how you plan to use those methods to reach the community.

plan a getaway

- Spend a weekend by the shores of a local lake, examining the stories of Christ's life centered in Galilee.
- Place those happenings in today's world, using modern words and examples and determine how the group can evangelize the community using those ancient ways of witnessing.

Q2: SHINING TO THE FAMILY

housebound

- Invite each in your group to choose one member of their family as their "witness target."
- Their assignment is to show that person (the witness target) one thing about God this week.

- Have them report back to the group the results of their action (if any) and share what they learned from the experiment.

little things

- Prepare a Sabbath service highlighting the "little witnesses" that Christians can share in the home—no grand schemes, no multi-city meetings, just one-on-one witnessing in the home.
- Use skits, music, and readings showing church members how they can share God's love anywhere.

Q3: SHINING TO PEERS

loud silence

- Spend a session discussing ways of generating a "silent witness" at school or work. This might include displaying spiritually uplifting artwork in your office, your choice of music and literature, and the ways you react to life situations.
- Have each person in the group choose one and apply it.

friendship

- Organize a weekend of activities to which your members can invite their friends.
- On Sabbath, hold health and relationship seminars.

- On Sunday, schedule games and other outdoor activities.
- Each day let your visitors know that you're trying to make their lives better and more meaningful.

Q4: SHINING IN THE CHURCH

thanksgiving

- Maintain a large bulletin board at your church with a supply of note cards and invite members to write short notes of thanks to God for their blessings.
- Include some artwork and decorations in and around the board.
- Refresh the board every month with new decorations, artwork, and notes.

this is me

- With your pastor's blessing, create a complete Sabbath service where each member in your group shares what God has done for them in the past.
- Some may witness in song, others through the spoken word or skits.
- Make sure each member glorifies God, not themselves.

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► SERVICE

Note

Each week focusing on service will include possible service project ideas and less "study." Suggested projects are excerpted from *Everybody Wants to Change the World: Practical Ideas for Social Justice*. You'll want to look ahead at future service ideas, as some may take considerable preparation.

If your group is not already engaged in ongoing service, use this introductory lesson to explore the role of service in the Christian's life and to plan future service projects.

Involve the youth in the identification of appropriate projects and discuss the need for various types of service, and how essential commitment and follow-through are in starting any given service project

Quotable Quotes

We are known by our fruits, not by our lack of fungus or leaf rot. – Mark Buchanan

The world can do almost anything as well as or better than the church. You need not be a Christian to build houses, feed the hungry or heal the sick. There is only one thing the world cannot do. It cannot offer grace. – Gordon MacDonald

What to do:

Look up the following texts and note what they reveal about the example Jesus sets for us: Matthew 4:23-25; Matthew 6:1-4; Matthew 10:1: 7-8; Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 1:35-39; Mark 6:31-34

Look up the following texts and note how the early church continued in service after Christ's death and resurrection: Acts 4:32-35; Acts 6:1-7; Acts 9:36; Acts 11:27-30

Read Matthew 10:24-25. **Ask:** In following Jesus' example, what is one thing we can expect to encounter?

Read Mark 10:13-15. **Ask:** How can service / interaction with the world help us in our Christian walk?

Consider

Discuss together the role of service in the Christian church, reflecting on the introductory quotes and the texts you've just read. Make plans for how you can serve others more effectively, both individually and corporately.

Explore the ways in which service and witnessing intertwine. Discuss the possible dangers of too closely relating service with witnessing. Give Biblical examples of those who were a witness through their service. Do you find any Biblical examples that withheld service to those that did not accept their message?

Source: *2009 Small Group Discussions for Adventist Youth*. Free download at, youth.gc.adventist.org

► LEADERSHIP

Story

Once there was a man who dared God to speak.

Burn the bush like You did for Moses, God ... and I will follow, Collapse the wall like You did for Joshua, God ... and I will fight. Still the waves like You did on Galilee, God ... and I will listen.

And so the man sat by a bush, near a wall, close to the sea, and waited for God to speak.

And God heard the man, so God answered. He sent fire, not for a bush, but for a church. He brought down a wall, not of brick, but of sin. He stilled a storm, not of the sea, but of a soul. And God waited for the man to respond. And He waited ... and He waited ... and waited.

But because the man was looking at bushes, not hearts; bricks and not lives, seas and not souls, he decided that God had done nothing. Finally he looked to God and asked, "Have You lost Your power?"

And God looked at him and said, "Have you lost your hearing?" — Max Lucado

Scripture

Compare and contrast the above with Jonah 4 and 1 Kings 19:11-12. *Read the remainder of 1 Kings 19.*

Ask: What are the implications of the above story and the scripture references to your ministry/witnessing?

Read the following Scriptures and outline the Biblical position on witnessing:

Matthew 9:37-38; John 4:28-39; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:15; Acts 4:2,31; 5:42; 8:4; Acts 15:35; Acts 2:41,47; 4:4; 11:18

Read the following and identify other reasons for witnessing:

Ezekiel 3:18; 33:9; John 15:8; John 15:16

Breakout time (divide in small groups)

Discuss what misconceptions you see in the readings. What are the dangers of such misconceptions? Identify any possible misconceptions in your ministry. What steps can you take to be sure you "hear" God when He speaks? Discuss God's "silence."

Identify as many different ways as possible that God "speaks" in the Bible. What are the implications for your ministry? Share ways in which God has "spoken" to you. How did you know it was God?

Discuss the idea of waiting on God to act before you do. Use Biblical texts to back up your points. On the one hand, is there ever a time where God has not already acted? On the other hand, is there ever a time you will be fully "prepared" to go witness? What is a person to do?

Source: 2009 Small Group Discussions for Adventist Youth. Free download at, youth.gc.adventist.org

SING 'N TELL

Preparation Time: Make sure you have enough song-books for everyone. Have someone "study" the origin of the song and then discuss it. Pencil and paper

You could ask:

Now that you have heard the origin of the song, do you feel any differently when you sing the song?

How do you think the author was feeling when he wrote the song?

If you are asked to add an additional stanza to the song, what would you write.

He's Got The Whole World In His Hands: Advent Youth Sing, #61

"He's got the Whole World in His Hands" was originally written by Obie Philpot, a native American. He is full-blooded Cherokee Indian. He was in the midst of World War II when his song was released. He left the lyrics to the song in his locker and upon his deployment it was cleaned out. The parchment upon which it was wrote was found and began airing on the radio.

This song, most obviously, refers to God. "He" is God. "the wind and the rain" is referring to fate. "The sun and moon" refers to the time that he lost with his family while at war. "the little bitty baby" is referring to his newborn son, whom he had not seen. "you and me brother" is meaning his brother that had recently passed away while also in the war. And "everybody here" is referring to his army friends and his family, plus every one in the world. Today, Obie enjoys life in the southern comforts of Louisiana at the ripe young age of 86. He has been through three wars and served in the Army and Air Force. He had twelve brothers and sisters. He has five children, several grandchildren, and two great grandchildren.

Source: <http://wikipedia.org/>

2 How Great Thou Art: SDA Hymnal, 86

The Original Swedish lyrics, titled "O, Store Gud" and written in 1886 were inspired by a visit to a beautiful country estate on the southeast coast of Sweden. Pastor Carl Boberg was suddenly caught in a midday thunderstorm with awe inspiring moments of flashing violence, followed by a clear brilliant sun. Soon afterwards he heard the calm sweet songs of the birds in nearby trees. The experience prompted the pastor to fall to his knees in humble adoration of his mighty God. (Osbeck 133) As the result of this experience he wrote a 9 stanza poem, and several years later at a conference, was surprised to hear his poem sung to the tune of an old Swedish folk melody.

It was translated into German, then a literal translation by an American in 1925: "O Mighty God, When I behold the Wonder." The song was also translated from German to Russian in 1927. Missionary Stuart Hine, inspired by the Russian words coupled with the awesome sights of the Carpathian mountains, wrote the first three English verses, the fourth came after WW II.

The hymn was made famous by George Beverly Shea during the Billy Graham Crusade in London.

Source: <http://joyfulministry.com/howgratt.htm>

Additional suggested songs for this session:

This is My Father's World: Advent Youth Sing, #188; SDA Hymnal, #92

I Sing The Mighty Power of God: SDA Hymnal, 88

Google.com is a good source of information for origin of song.

GREAT IDEAS: Environmental

► **Life Issue:** Environmental

Bible Passages: Psalm 103:15-18; Job 13:15; Luke 13:1-5

Central Bible Truth: God is still in control in spite of natural disasters.

Teaching Aim: To lead youth to discover what part God plays in natural disasters and to list ways to go on with life.

1. A Matching Game

(15 min.) Before youth arrive, set up the following game. Write each one of these 10 words on two sheets of construction paper so the writing does not show through the paper: *Hurricane, Tornado, Earthquake, Wildfire, Flood, Mud Slide, Famine, Tidal Wave, Blizzard, and Lightning*. You should now have 20 sheets of construction paper. At random, number the papers from 1 to 20 on the reverse side. Place them on a focal wall with tape or pushpins so only the numbers show. When youth arrive, divide into two teams. Instruct youth to take turns calling two numbers and disclosing the words behind them so as to try and make a match. If the two words do not match, place them back on the wall. As words are matched, remove them from the wall and ask the following questions:

1. Have you heard of this event occurring recently? Where? When?
2. Were people injured or killed?
3. Have you ever encountered this type of disaster?
4. How is God involved in this disaster? How is man involved?
5. Is it a natural, man-made, or supernatural disaster? Combination?

After all the words are matched, declare the winning team.

2. Interview

Invite a Christian environmentalist to your group. (You may be able to invite a science teacher from a local Christian high school or Christian college.) Prepare a short interview (probably no more than 10 minutes) with the guest that explains why it is important for Christians to be good stewards of the earth.

3. Thought-Provoking Statements and Questions

(10 min.) Present the following three statements for discussion, and see how many youth agree with these

principles. List each principle on a chalkboard or focal wall and give youth a moment to respond.

- A. God is love.
- B. God is all-powerful.
- C. Good people, Christians, and innocent children suffer in natural disasters.

Ask: Is it possible for all three of these statements to be true?

Point out that the answer from human understanding would seem to be no, yet most Christians would agree that all three of these statements are true. Read aloud Psalm 103:15-18, and ask how this passage

4. Some Heavy-Weight Thoughts About God

(10 min.) Present a mini-lecture using the following points. Encourage questions and discussion on this subject.

- A. God is all-loving, but He does not force His love upon individuals or the world. That is why we have the freedom to serve God or rebel and sin. God is love, but He has chosen to establish a relationship with those who will receive it (John 3:16).
- B. God is all-powerful. He is the Creator and Sustainer, but He has

given man the ability to think, to choose, and even to reject God. God has limited His own power on the earth for a time to allow mankind to enjoy a fellowship which God has not forced on him by God's own awesome power. God is still involved in His creation, especially when man chooses to obey, listen, and love.

C. "Good" people, Christians, and innocent children do suffer in natural disasters! We do not know all the "whys" of natural disasters. We do know there are natural laws in place such as gravity, motion, and so forth. God can intervene, but He is not a vending machine where we punch in our desires and He always must respond.

If your group is really mature you might have them consider the fact that mankind's sin has completely affected everything, including the earth and all that is related to it. Natural disasters, then, are a result of the utter sinfulness of man. Do not raise this issue if your folks are surface students of Scripture. The questions of "innocence" and "goodness" remind us of Psalm 103:15. The true miracle is that God would take the time to love one so sinful and so small as you and I. If humans got what they deserved, we would all be dead and doomed right now. Every minute of our lives is a gift from God.

5. A Real-Life Story

(15 min.) Read the following incident from *Time* magazine related to the Los Angeles earthquake of January 1994:

"Why did it have to be my daughter?" cried a broken father after his child was crushed in a collapsing building in California. "Why did I move here? To lose my daughter in an earthquake?"

Provide a pencil and paper for each youth, and ask them to respond to this hypothetical question from the father whose daughter was killed: *"How can I believe in a God who would do this?"* Allow five minutes for youth to write their thoughts. Ask volunteers to share a brief word about their answers.

6. Prayer for a Deeper Faith

(5 min.) Read aloud Job 13:15a and comment on the faith of Job. State that we have an endless hope, not a hopeless end. Play Michael English's song, "Holding Out Hope to You" from his *Hope* tape or compact disc or some other

appropriate song. Close in a word of prayer for deepening faith and for those all around the world dealing with natural disasters at this moment.

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new year
RESOLVE

► Revive Us Again

What you will need: Pencil and paper for each person

Bible text: Ephesians 4:13

Song: Revive Us Again

What to do: Have each person write one positive resolution they want to make and one negative thing they want to stop doing for each of these four areas of their lives, spiritual, emotional, social, and physical. The resolutions should be specific. Give each person a few minutes to do this. After about 5-7 minutes have each person share their resolution with the group.

Discuss: Why is it difficult to keep these promises to ourselves? What can we do differently to help us keep our new year resolutions?

► STEWARDS OF THE EARTH

by Kimberley Tagert-Paul

Program Target: To help the youth discover that keeping the environmental Golden Rule is important to God. To show that stewardship of the earth that God created has been given to us—but we are failing at our job, and that we can make a difference if we try.

Introduction: The Golden Rule tells us to “Do unto others as you would have them do to you.” This is a rule that comes from our Creator. Yet He created more than man. He made the earth, the trees and plants, the animals, even the air we breathe. And when He created them, what did He say? (Allow time for an answer.) He said, “It is good.” He put man in charge of the care of the earth—yet in the past centuries especially, we are rushing forward in ways that are destroying the earth. Should we care about this? (Wait for answers.) Can we do anything about it? (Wait for answers but limit them. Most will be discussed in the group setting.)

There is an ecological golden rule too. It says that each generation should meet its needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Stewardship for God goes further than money, time, and talent. It includes stewardship of the earth. It includes lifestyle choices that don’t compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Bible Texts: Luke 6:3 Psalms 94:1.

Prep Time: Have four chairs/stools ready for the after group discussion. Make the signs as indicated in the body of the text for each group. Have a pad and paper for each group.

To Do: Divide the group into four smaller groups and make sure that they are isolated from each other. Post the signs *you have made for each group on the door and let them have 25 minutes to do what each says. [***Make signs by copying the text following for each group and add that they are to elect a leader who will take notes for the group and lead the discussion. Give each group a pad of paper and a pen to write out their answers.**]

Group One – Aeroggles

You like to breathe, don’t you? Well, you have enough clean air for your generation (about 20 years, but after that. . . .) Why do you think this is happening in Aeroggle? Can you do anything about it? What?

Group Two – Waggles

Congratulations! You have plenty of clean air, food, and water. But you have a BIG problem. You have almost run out of land—land for your disposal needs, that is. Building a tower of garbage isn’t going to work any better than the Tower of Babel did. Why do you think this is happening to the Waggles? What, if anything, can you do about it? What country do you think you are in?

Group Three – Gobbles

Gobble, gobble, gobble. You are in the land of Gobble. You have a BIG problem. You are running out of clean water. Why do you think this happened in Gobble? Can you do anything about it? What? (Hint: Earth is 2/3 water, but all the fresh water streams only represent one hundredth of one percent of the water.)

Group Four – Hoggles

Energy—you may have enough—but the land of the Hoggle doesn’t. Your land is running out of it. What are some of the ways you can conserve what energy you do have? Why do you think this has happened to Hoggle? (Hint: Close your curtains on hot days and open them on cool days.)

Big group (Have four chairs/stools set in front for the presidents of each group. Discuss as a group each problem and the solutions they came up with. Allow about 10-15 minutes for discussion. Some ideas you might want to share with them . . .

Aeroggles – Did you know:

There are about 500 million autos on earth and they burn an average of 2 gallons of fuel each a day.

Each gallon releases 20 lbs. of carbon dioxide into the air.

The U.S. is the largest emitter of carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels.

Air pollution results in acid rain.

Asthma in Western countries is up 80% in the past 20 years and is blamed on air pollution.

Gobbles – Did you know:

Each person in the U.S. throws away about 4 pounds of garbage daily.

Most families throw away about 88 pound of plastic yearly.

14 billion pound of trash is dumped into the ocean every year.

84% of all household waste can be recycled.

Most plastics and cans take 500 years to break down.

Waggles - Did you know:

1/3 of all water is used to flush the toilet.

We each use about 12,000 gallons of water every year.

1 gallon of motor oil can contaminate up to 2 million gallons of water.

A 10 minute shower uses 50-70 gallons of water.

Hoggles - Did you know . . .

1/3 of all energy is used by people at home.

1 glass bottle we recycle saves enough energy to light a traditional light bulb 4 hours

It takes 90% less energy to recycle aluminum cans than to make new ones.

The U.S. comprises only about 5% of the world population but we use 33% of the world’s paper, 25% of the world’s oil, and 27% of the world’s aluminum. What can we do about our stewardship? We can demonstrate concern and regard for all life through stewardship of natural resources. We can practice responsible lifestyles to protect and nurture the environment.

Closing thought: We need to stop thinking that what we want is what we need.

► WHAT WE TAKE FOR GRANTED:

Our Ecology in Crisis by Kimberley Tagert-Paul

Program Target: To encourage awareness of environmental issues affecting our world. To realize that God the Creator expects us to do what we can and be stewards of the world He has given us.

What to do: Have several sheets of poster board and markers available. Have an aquarium set on a table in the front where everyone can see it (either with fish or empty, but with things you need such as gravel, filter, water, etc.).

Scripture: Genesis 1:29-31.

Opening Thought: Look at this fish tank. Keeping its occupants alive takes work. You have to feed the fish each day, make sure the pump, filter, and lamp are working. Tanks require regular cleaning. These actions are essential for sustaining life. If any of them are neglected the fish die—it’s that simple.

Like a fish tank, the earth is a closed system. Like a fish tank, we can’t add anything. God created our earth with everything we need to sustain it. If we use something up - there’s no way to get more.

Like a fish tank - we can’t take anything away. There’s really no throwaway in our ecosystem. Matter changes form but nothing truly disappears. But we are capable of making decisions about our impact on the system - our earth. Sustainability is living in a way that keeps our earth in good shape. We must use our resources wisely. But unfortunately, we take many things for granted.

Take Action: Divide into small groups of 6-8 and give each group a poster board and marker.

Spend about 10-15 minutes letting each group answer the following question. You can make a few suggestions to get them started, but it would be better to let them think on their own.

“Come up with a list of at least ten things that we take for granted in our environment.”

(Things like clean water to swim in, fresh drinking water, indoor plumbing, etc. .).

After each group comes up with their list, re-gather as a group.

Now, with a poster/chalk board, have each group read their lists and write down each one that is different from the rest. Allow time for discussion as you do this. (This will take at least 15 minutes.) Other thoughts can be added as the larger group comes up with them.

Use the following to continue the discussion.

- 1) How would our world be different without these items that we take for granted?
- 2) How about the animals that are becoming extinct. Would not seeing them impact us?
- 3) What steps can we take to help insure that these things we take for granted will still be there for our use?

Ways to help our environment: R-cubed—Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Close doors, turn off lights, turn off water when not in direct use (like when brushing teeth), eat seasonal/organic/local produce. Practice conservation.

Ask the group: “What other things can we do? Do you know about recycling in our area? Where can we find more information?”

Conclusion: Most of what we do and make comes from fossil fuels: But where do fossil fuels come from? (Allow discussion) Fossil fuels come from Noah and the flood. The compressed matter from the flood is where most of our oil, coal, and natural gas comes from. Most plastics are chemically fabricated from fossil fuels. So your car runs on dinosaur power and your computer is made from old ferns.

Alan Stewart Paton, a South African writer, once said: “The ground is holy, being as it came from the Creator. Keep it, guard it, care for it, for it keeps man, guards man, and cares for man. Destroy it and man is destroyed.”

So, can one person make a difference? On August 1, 1970, Lain Guthrie took a stand. He was a commercial airline pilot. That day, he followed his conscience. At the time, the industry standard was to dump waste kerosene (jet fuel) into the environment during takeoff or at high altitudes. The pilots were told it did not harm the environment, but Guthrie didn’t believe it. During peak flying, he knew that more than 500 gallons of fuel were dumped every day over his home airport of Miami. So, on Aug. 1, he sat in his plane and refused to take off until the waste fuel was pumped out of his plane. He did this until two months later when he was fired by the airline for insubordination. But by then, other pilots were following their conscience. Finally, Guthrie was rehired and soon the industry as a whole stopped the practice of aerial fuel dumping.

Often the question is who will lead the way and be the first to pay the price for following his/her conscience. If we do this it encourages others to follow theirs. But making the right choice, whether others follow or not, is the right choice. We need to take a stand to improve our habits—or the things we take for granted may not be there for us in the future.



INFORMATION: www.healthlifestyleconf.com
REGISTRATION: <http://www.plusline.org/eventdetail.php?id=10113>

1 CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT by Kimberley Tagert-Paul and Patti Emanuele

► **Life Issue:** Saving our environment
by Kimberley Tagert-Paul

Bible Passage: Luke 16:2: “So he called him in and asked him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.’”

Central Bible Truth: God created everything we need to sustain life on our planet. Because of sin and our careless habits, we are slowly (or not so slowly) destroying it.

Teaching Aim/Program Target: To point out how blind we can be to our own habits.

Setting: Study area desk and a couple chairs.

Characters: Kyle, Marrissa

Kyle is studying at his desk. He has his feet propped up and is reading a text book on the ecology. Around him are things in disposable packaging: plastic water bottles, chips, a paper cup, single sheets of paper, pens and pencils, individual cups of applesauce/fruit, candy bar, an apple, etc. A small metal trash can is sitting on the desk. (Make sure that the can is filled almost to the top, but not enough for the audience to see into it.)

Kyle finishes the water and tosses the empty bottle into a tin trash can sitting on his desk.

He studies a few seconds and grabs the apple and takes a bite. He makes a face and throws it into the can. Next he grabs the candy bar . . . opens it and throws the paper away. He starts to write on paper, shakes his head, and wads it up throwing it into the can. He grabs another bottle of water, pouring some into a cup.

Marrissa: (Entering room) Hey, Kyle. Whatcha doing?

Kyle: (looks up and crumbles the cup and throws it into the basket) Studying. I have to write a paper on ecology . . . You know - recycling, things to do . . . Stuff like that.

Marrissa: Found anything interesting?

Kyle: Sure. Like, did you know that the garbage in a landfill stays for about 30 years? Want some chips?

Marrissa: (She takes a few chips then watches while Kyle wads up the empty bag and throws it in the can.) Really? 30 years?

Kyle: Yep. And did you know that the amount of wood and paper we throw away is enough to heat 50 million homes for 20 years. (Kyle starts to write the fact down, but his pen doesn’t work, so he throws it in the trash can. He next takes a pencil but lead is broken and he throws that in the can. He grabs another pen, then wads up the paper he was

working on and throws it away.) Want some water? (He hands Marrissa a plastic bottle of water)

Marrissa: Wow. That’s amazing. What’s the best thing we can do for the environment, then?

Kyle: That’s easy. R-cubed. Reduce, reuse, recycle. (He wads up another paper and throws it in the trash can. By this point the trash should be peeking out of the can.)

Marrissa: (Drinks the water but holds onto her bottle) I had no idea. How much of our stuff can be recycled?

Kyle: That’s the amazing part: Almost 84 percent of all household waste.

Marrissa: (Looks at the can—then tips it to look further into it) When’s the last time you took out your garbage?

Kyle: (Looks at the can) Just before I started studying. (He tosses another empty package at the can)

Marrissa: (Looking at Kyle) Maybe you shouldn’t study so hard. (She exits, taking her bottle of water and shaking her head.)

Kyle looks at the can, then at the retreating figure of Marrissa, then back at his book. He shakes his head, shrugs his shoulders not understanding what Marrissa meant.

► **Life Issue:** Taking care of God's world
by Patti Emanuele

Bible Passage: Deuteronomy 11:12:
"It is a land the Lord your God cares
for; the eyes of the Lord your God are
continually on it from the beginning of
the year to its end."

Central Bible Truth: God is
watching over His world.

Teaching Aim: It is important to
remember that God expects us to
care for his land and that we are its
caretakers.

Setting: Saturday car trip

Characters: Mike, Jim, Steph, Chris

Steph: This was such a great idea to go
for this day trip on such a sunny day."

Chris: Yeah, it's great. I love being
outdoors. The trees are so beautiful."

Jim: I'm starting to get hungry. Maybe
we should stop and look for a place
to eat our lunches. Everyone look for
a place to stop."

Mike is driving the car.

Mike: Let's look for a place where
there are picnic tables."

Chris: Pull over there." Chris points to a park by the side of the road.

Mike: Get the cooler Jim okay? I'll get the bags of chips."

Steph: These sandwiches are wrapped so tightly in this plastic I can barely
get my sandwich out.

Chris: Not to mention they put it in these little Styrofoam boxes. What's with
that?"

Steph: I have no idea. I think they think the food will stay fresher that way.

Jim lets his plastic wrap blow in the wind.

Chris: Jim, go get that!

Jim: Calm down. It'll just decompose."

Chris: Are you kidding? Did you sleep through earth science? That stuff will
never decompose.

Mike collects everyone's trash and heads for the dumpster.

Steph: Actually, when you think about it, we probably should have made and
wrapped our own food. There's a lot we can do to control our mess and save
the environment.

Christ: It's what God would want us to do. It is His world that He gave us to
care for. He's probably not real thrilled with all the pollution in the world.

Jim starts walking around the park and is picking up paper, bottles etc.

Mike: Come on, Jim it's time to go.

Jim: I can't go until I get this cleaned up."

Mike: How about we help you. Come on guys. It'll go faster that way.

All of them start picking up trash in the picnic area.

► **Life Issue:** Pollution in God's world by Patti Emanuele

Bible Passage: Psalm 143:5, I remember the days of long ago, I meditate on
all your works and consider what your hands have done.

Central Bible Truth: God has created a beautiful world and we need to
remember that.

Teaching Aim: God gave us a clean world full of beauty, we should do all we
can to remember that and consider our lifestyle in order to keep it that way.

Setting: The beach

Characters: Cara, Mary, Anna

Cara: It sure is a beautiful day. Look at how sunny it is. The water looks like
dancing diamonds.

Anna: Mmm, I love the beach. What a great way to spend a day off from school.
This was a great idea, Mary.

Mary takes a little bow.

Mary: Thank you, ladies.

The girls spread their towels and lay down on the warm sand.

Anna: Sometimes I am amazed when I think of the world and all the beauty
that God created. I mean look at that blue water.

Anna sits up and waves her hand toward the ocean.

Mary raises herself up to take a look.

Mary: Hey what's that?

Mary points to dark clouds of smoke settling over the crystal blue water.

Cara: I think, oh no, I think that smoke is coming from those factories.

Cara points at two large smoke stacks on the distant shore spitting out smoke.

Mary: Those are oil refineries.

Anna: That's awful how it's ruining
the beautiful view.

Mary: Not to mention the health
risks. Look at those moms leaving.

*Mary points to several mothers gathering
their children to go home as they point at
the black clouds.*

Anna: I hate to say this, but I think
it would be safer to leave too. I don't
want to breathe that stuff in.

Back in the car Cara sighs.

Cara: It was such a perfect day.
Why do humans always pollute what
God has given to us to enjoy? There
must be another way.

Anna: I hope so. I heard recently
that there is a rise in brain cancer
from the chemicals that we are
breathing.

Cara: It must break God's heart
that we are spoiling what He has
given us. It's our responsibility to
take care of it.

Mary: Today made me really start
thinking about what I can do to help
solve this problem. I'm going to pray
and look at my own bad habits and
try to change them.

Anna: Me too.
All three girls ride home in silence.

FACT: "The earth is the Lord's and the
fullness thereof; the world and they that
dwell therein." (Psalm 24:1, KJV)

FACT: "But with eager hope, the creation looks for-
ward to the day when it will join God's children in glo-
rious freedom from death and decay." (Romans 8:20, 21, NLT)

2 TAKING CARE OF THE EARTH *by Patti Emanuele*

► **Focus:** Global Warming
Are we murdering the earth?

Life Issue: Following God's plan for our lives

Bible Passage: Ephesians 5:17: "Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."

Central Bible Truth: Seek God's will in every aspect.

Teaching Aim: We must take responsibility for this earth and seek God's instruction to preserve it.

Setting: Dinner table

Characters: Brian and his parents, sister Suzy

Brian: I need to talk with you Mom and Dad.

Dad: That sounds serious. Let's say grace over our food first and then we can talk.

Family bows their heads.

Mom: Suzy, sit up straight. Don't chew with your mouth open.

Dad: Brian let me have some of those potatoes.

Brian: Listen I want to talk about my course work for next semester.

Dad: Okay son, shoot.

Brian: I've been thinking. I know that we discussed me becoming a doctor and all, but I've been learning some things this year in school that really interests me for the future.

Dad: What are you talking about? You've been planning to be a doctor for years. Here you are in your senior year of high school and you can finally start working on that goal.

Brian: I know. The truth is I've been studying my Bible and...

Mom: Studying your Bible? Well, that's always a good thing.

Brian: Please, Mom, listen to me. We've been learning all about pollution and how they think it is affecting our planet. Scientists think it's causing global warming.

Dad: I know all about that, Brian. What does that have to do with college?

Brian: That's what I've been praying about. Do you know that if I became an environmental scientist or even a chemical engineer I could affect how people live their lives now so that there would be a cleaner future?

Mom: That sounds right, Brian. I guess we could change a few things around here too.

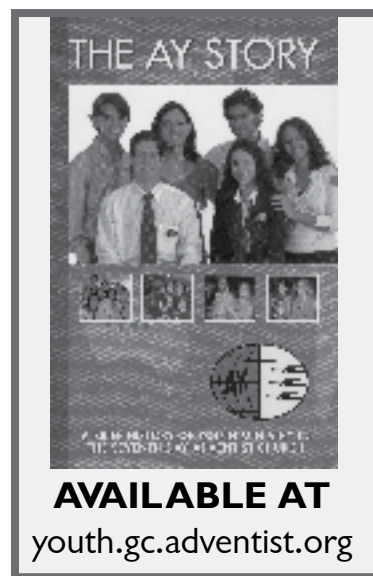
Brian brightens.

Brian: So, Dad, I want to know what you think about my career choice. It's important to me and I think God is telling me to pursue this.

Dad: It's always the right thing to listen to the Holy Spirit, Brian. This is an important issue. We have to think about these issues especially as Christians because God has blessed us with a beautiful planet. He doesn't want us to abuse what He has given us.

Brian: I'm really glad that you agree dad. Maybe after dinner we can look at those course catalogues.... Thanks dad.

The family settles down to finish their dinner.



► **Focus:** Global Warming

Life Issue: Thinking of others

Bible Passage: I Corinthians 12: 25: So that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Central Bible Truth: God says that there should be equal concern for each other.

Teaching Aim: We must use self-discipline and self-control in thinking of others' needs beyond our own.

Setting: Car lot

Characters: Don and James

Don: I am so psyched. I'm finally getting my own car.

James: Well, I guess you can't ride your bicycle to college. It's only 200 miles away.

Don: I worked for two summers and a part-time job last year just to get to this day. I know exactly what I want.

James: Something large, safe, and gas friendly.

Don: Yeah, right. I've got my mind set on something a little fancier.

Don walks over to a group of parked used sports cars.

Don: Look at that, aren't they beautiful? I kind of favor the red one, what do you think?

Don runs his hands over a polished red sports car.

James: It's beautiful that's for sure. Look at the sticker can you afford it?

Don whistles.

Don: It is expensive. I really want it though.

James: You know what? I think you should step aside and think about this a little while. That car is a real gas guzzler. Not to mention all the fumes you'll be burning up as you drive. People breathe that stuff you know.

Don: I guess you're right. I'll think about it.

James: You need to think also about what is a good responsible choice. The truth is, the car you choose can contribute to global warming.

Don: Please, I'm just one guy who wants one car. I don't think I'm going to destroy mankind as we know it by driving one red sports car.

James: Well it's your decision but I think that God does want us to think about our choices and how they affect others. Let's keep looking and you think about what I've said and then make your choice.

Don: Ouch, you sure know how to make a guy feel guilty. I do want to think of others. As a Christian I know that's what God would want me to do. I just need to grieve a little over that red sports car.

James laughs.

James: Let's go grab a 'burger and plan another attack on another car lot.

Don nods his head yes and climbs into James's car.

Don: Let's go now. I can't look back.

TIP FOR TODAY

Create a **SKIT WARDROBE** with costumes, old clothes, and props for your drama/skit productions or even last-minute illustrations.

Ask people to **donate** funny looking clothes and other stuff. Your local thrift/second-hand shop is a great place to look.

3 CARING FOR OUR BODIES by Patti Emanuele

► Focus: Eating Disorders

Life Issue: Taking care of our bodies

Bible Passage: I Corinthians 6: 19-20: “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own, you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”

Central Bible Truth: God says that we should remember that our body is a gift from God and houses the Holy Spirit.

Teaching Aim: To teach youth to respect their bodies for the Lord.

Setting: Gym class

Characters: Barb, Steph, Chris, and Jodi

Barb: I really like this class. I enjoy running. It makes me feel so healthy.

Jodi: Me too, although I’m not crazy about redressing and putting on makeup for the next class.

Steph: Yeah, you said it.

Jodi: Where did Chris go? I haven’t seen her since Ms. Andrew told us class was over.

Showers can be heard running in the next room. (Use recording of shower sound)

Barb: She must be in the shower.

A cell phone rings.

Barb: That’s Chris’s phone. She said her mom might have to call her. I better answer it.

Barb picks it up, answers it and puts it down.

Barb: Quick Jodi, go and tell Chris her mom wants to talk with her.

Jodi runs to the showers and calls out: Chris, phone call!

No answer from the showers.

Jodi continues to call her name.

No answer.

From the bathroom stall Jodi hears someone getting sick.

Jodi: Chris? Are you in there?

Chris weakly: Uh huh I’m in here.

Chris: I’ll be out in a second.

Chris emerges white faced.

Jodi: Are you okay?

Barb: You were sick again Chris?

Chris is silent.

Barb: We’ve been very concerned about you Chris. You’ve been losing weight and getting sick all the time. Do you want to tell us what’s wrong?

Chris: My family has been having a lot of problems. Plus, I am almost failing math. I just can’t handle all the stress. I feel ugly and fat.

Jodi: Fat? You need a good hamburger dinner.

Barb: Yeah, I can see your ribs.

Jodi: Chris I don’t think you see yourself as God sees you. You are beautiful and valuable to Him. He gave you his spirit and a body to house it in. He cares about your problems and wants you to bring them to Him.

Chris: I know you’re right. My mom asked me about seeing a doctor. I think I will and then I’m going to talk with my pastor. I feel awful all the time.

Steph: I am so glad to hear that. When you feel better we’ll go get that hamburger dinner.

Chris laughs and hugs Steph.

Chris: You’ve got a deal.

► Focus: Eating Disorders

Life Issue: How we view our bodies

Bible Passage: Proverbs 31: 30: “Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.”

Central Bible Truth: God says true beauty springs from our relationship with Jesus Christ.

Teaching Aim: Youth need to realize that the world may value our external beauty but God sees our hearts and our beauty should shine from within. Our relationship to Jesus makes us truly beautiful.

Setting: Women’s dressing room at a department store

Characters: Monica, Jane, Marta

Marta is trying on clothes in the lady’s dressing room.

Monica: Marta, how’s it going in there? You’ve been in there forever.

Marta: I’m okay.

Jane: You don’t sound okay. What’s wrong?

Marta weakly: I look awful. I don’t know why I look so awful in this dress. It looks so nice on the girls in the magazine.

Jane: Come out here and show us.

Marta pulls aside the curtain and cautiously emerges from the changing room.

Monica: You look great. The color is good, the fit’s good but boy are you skinny. Don’t you eat?

Marta: I can’t eat you know that. If I eat one wrong thing I blow up. Then I can’t wear clothes like this.

Jane: You’re kidding right? I’m sure you would be beautiful no matter what size you were.

Later Marta pays for the dress and the three girls decide to stop for lunch.

Jane and Monica watch as Marta pushes her salad around on her plate.

Monica: Marta this has to stop. You don’t need to lose weight.

Marta: You say that but I want to look beautiful just like the models in the magazines and on television.

Jane: Those images aren’t real. A lot of those pictures are altered

Monica: You know who’s beautiful, Carrie. She always is glowing. She’s not hung up on makeup or clothes. She’s honest and a good friend. Everyone loves her.

Jane: I agree. She told me once that she gets her glow from her relationship with Jesus Christ. He gives her a natural high.

Marta: Maybe I should talk with Carrie. I’m kind of sick of worrying about how thin I am all the time. I wish I could relax and just be me.

Jane: I think that’s a great idea.

Marta is silent.

Marta: Enough salad, I want a slice of that pizza.

Everyone laughs as they push the pizza pan toward Marta.

► Focus: Eating Disorders

Life Issue: Our lifestyle

Bible Passage: I Timothy 4: 12

Central Bible Truth: “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.”

Teaching Aim: We need to remember that others watch our behavior and we are an example of Christ in their lives.

Setting: Kitchen on a Sunday

Characters: Maryanne, Jodi her sister and their mom.

Jodi: “What are you doin’?”

Maryanne: “Making lunch. Do you want some?”

Jodi: “What are you gonna’ eat?”

Maryanne: “I’m not sure. I’ll fix yours though. How about peanut butter and jelly, or tuna? I know mom has a can of spaghetti O’s in here somewhere.”

Maryanne rummages through the pantry.

Jodi: “Are you gonna eat peanut butter?”

Maryanne laughs.

Maryanne: “Not me, sweetie. I’m not hungry. I think I’ll just have a glass of water right now.”

Jodi: “I’ll just have water too just like you.”

Maryanne irritated: “What’s going on? Don’t you like what we have to eat?”

Jodi: “If you’re not gonna eat, I’m not gonna’ eat. I want to be skinny like you Maryanne.”

Maryanne: “Jodi, you’re only 6 years old. You have to eat. You’re body is still growing. You need the energy.”

Jodi: “Is your body still growing Maryanne? Don’t you need energy?”

Maryanne: “Um, I’m not 6 like you, Jodi. I need to lose some weight. You are pretty just the way you are.”

Jodi: “I think you’re pretty. Why are you always so sick, Maryanne?”

Maryanne: “Never mind that. I’m going to make you a peanut butter sandwich just the way you like it. Maybe you can have some ice cream after that.”

Jodi shakes her head no.

Jodi: “I want to be just like you. I want to be real skinny and beautiful. I’m not gonna eat until you do.”

Mom walks in. She glances at Maryanne in horror.

Mom: “Maryanne, it’s time to take you to a doctor. You have to eat.”

Maryanne: “I’m okay Mom.”

Jodi: “Mom, she’s skinny and beautiful. I want to be just like my sister.”

Mom sighs.

Mom: “Maryanne, you have to get well. Your eating disorder is affecting your sister. God says that we are examples to others. Do you want your sister to develop an eating disorder too?”

Maryanne ignores her mother.

Maryanne: “Jodi, eat your lunch.”

Jodi: “No not until you eat too.”

Maryanne is silent.

Maryanne: “Okay Mom, you win. Make that appointment with the doctor.”

► **Focus:** Eating Disorders

Life Issue: Honoring God with our bodies

Bible Passage: Isaiah 40:20-31: He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.

Central Bible Truth: Our strength must come from the Lord. He will lift us up with his power when we become tired.

Teaching Aim: We must honor God by treating our bodies respectfully with how we live and what we eat. God will make us strong.

Setting: Wrestling after school

Characters: John, David, Mark, Coach

John: I am so psyched. We’re going to beat K school.

Mark: How true. We’ve got all the moves down.

Coach: David, you’re matched with **Jared**. Let’s get you weighed.

David steps on the scale.

The coach whistles.

Coach: You dropped some serious weight, David. What have you been doing?

David clears his throat.

David: Just the usual coach. I’m watching what I eat, exercising, I lift weights.

Coach stares at David and clears his throat.

Coach: I don’t think you can lose this much weight in a week doing just that. Something else is going on.

Coach waits for David to reply.

John intervenes.

John: Coach we’ve all lost that much weight. We’ve been working hard you know that.

Mark: Yeah coach, we want to win. Why don’t you weigh me next?

Coach moves on to Mark and then John on the scales.

Coach: Well, you all have lost significant weight. You are all qualified in your weight class to wrestle but we need to talk.

After the meet, and when the locker room is empty, the coach calls all three boys together.

Coach: I told you we needed to talk. I am glad that you did so well today. You handled yourselves well. I still need to get back to your weights. I know from experience that you guys must be either using pills to lose weight or getting sick. That’s very dangerous for your bodies. I insist that you honor your bodies as God would want you to and treat them as temples of the Holy Spirit. That means not abusing yourselves but relying on natural, healthy means to become strong. Ultimately God will fill you with His strength if you honor and trust Him. Do we understand each other?

All three boys are quiet.

Mark: Coach does that mean we can go eat fries and shakes now?

The boys laugh.

Coach: I insist. Get going now.

The three boys race from the locker room and burst through the door that leads outside.

TOP 10 DEADLIEST NATURAL DISASTERS

A NATURAL DISASTER IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF A NATURAL HAZARD (E.G. VOLCANIC ERUPTION, EARTHQUAKE, LANDSLIDE) WHICH MOVES FROM POTENTIAL INTO AN ACTIVE PHASE, AND AS A RESULT AFFECTS HUMAN ACTIVITIES. IN SOME CASES THESE DISASTERS HAVE LEAD TO THE LOSS OF MILLIONS OF LIVES. THIS IS A LIST OF THE TOP 10 NATURAL DISASTERS (RANKED BY NUMBER OF FATALITIES). FROM FEWEST TO MOST KILLED:

10. Aleppo Earthquake - 1138, Syria [Deaths: 230,000]

Aleppo is located along the northern part of the Dead Sea Transform system of geologic faults, which is a plate boundary separating the Arabian plate from the African plate. The earthquake was the beginning of the first of two intense sequences of earthquakes in the region: October 1138 to June 1139 and a much more intense series from September 1156 to May 1159.

The worst hit area was Harim, where Crusaders had built a large citadel. Sources indicate that the castle was destroyed and the church fell in on itself. The fort of Atharib, then occupied by Muslims, was destroyed. The citadel also collapsed, killing 600 of the castle guard, though the governor and some servants survived, and fled to Mosul.

9. Indian Ocean Earthquake - 2004, Indian Ocean [Deaths: 230,000]

The 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake, known by the scientific community as the Sumatra-Andaman earthquake, was an undersea earthquake that occurred at 00:58:53 UTC (07:58:53 local time) December 26, 2004, with an epicenter off the west coast of Sumatra, Indonesia. The earthquake triggered a series of devastating tsunamis along the coasts of most landmasses bordering the Indian Ocean, killing large numbers of people and inundating coastal communities.

The magnitude of the earthquake was originally recorded as 9.0, but has been increased to between 9.1 and 9.3. At this magnitude, it is the second largest earthquake ever recorded on a seismograph. It

was large enough that it caused the entire planet to vibrate as much as half an inch, or over a centimeter.

8. Banqiao Dam Failure - 1975, China [Deaths: 231,000]

Banqiao Dam was designed to survive a 1-in-1,000-year flood (306 mm (12 inches) rainfall per day). In August of 1975, however, a 1-in-2,000 year flood occurred, pouring more than a year's rainfall in 24 hours, which weather forecasts failed to predict. The sluice gates were not able to handle the overflow of water, partially due to sedimentation blockage. As a result of the blockage, 64 dams failed.

When the dam finally burst, it caused a large wave, which was 10 kilometers (6 miles) wide, 3-7 meters (9-23 feet) high, to rush downwards into the plains below at nearly 50 kilometers per hour (31 mph). It almost wiped out an area 55 kilometers long, 15 kilometers wide, and created temporary lakes as large as 12,000 km² (4,600 square miles). Evacuation orders had not been fully delivered because of weather conditions and poor communications.

7. Tangshan Earthquake - 1976, China [Deaths: 242,000]

The Tangshan earthquake is one of the largest earthquakes to hit the modern world, in terms of the loss of life. The epicenter of the earthquake was near Tangshan in Hebei, China, an industrial city with approximately one million inhabitants. The earthquake hit in the early morning, at 03:42:53.8 local time (1976 July 27 19:42:53.8 UTC), and lasted for around 15 seconds. Chinese Government's official sources state 7.8

on the Richter magnitude scale, though some sources list it as 8.2. It was the first earthquake in recent history to score a direct hit on a major city.

The People's Republic of China government refused to accept international aid, and its own efforts were criticized as inadequate. It was also criticized for having ignored scientists' warnings of the need to prepare for an earthquake. The ramifications of the political situation created, largely contributed to the end of the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

6. Kaifeng Flood - 1642, China [Deaths: 300,000]

Kaifeng, a prefecture-level city in eastern Henan province, People's Republic of China, located along the southern bank of the Yellow River, was flooded in 1642 by the Ming army with water from Yellow River to prevent the peasant rebel Li Zicheng from taking over. Roughly half of the 600,000 residents of Kaifeng were killed by the flood and the ensuing peripheral disasters such as famine and plague, making it one of the deadliest single acts of war in history (excluding systematic genocide) and the second greatest single loss of human life of its time. The flood is sometimes referred to as a natural disaster due to the role of the Huang He River.

5. India Cyclone - 1839, India [Deaths: 300,000+]

In 1839, a 40-foot tidal wave caused by an enormous cyclone wiped out the harbor city of Coringa that was never entirely rebuilt; 20,000 vessels in the bay were destroyed and 300,000 people died. This was not the first major catas-

trophe to occur in Coringa: in 1789 three tidal waves caused by a cyclone destroyed the harbor city at the mouth of the Ganges River. Most ships were sunk and estimated 20,000 people drowned.

4. Shaanxi Earthquake - 1556, China [Deaths: 830,000]

The 1556 Shaanxi earthquake or Hua County earthquake is the deadliest earthquake on record, killing approximately 830,000 people. It occurred on the morning of 23 January 1556 in Shaanxi, China. More than 97 counties were affected. A 520 mile-wide area was destroyed and in some counties, sixty percent of the population was killed. Most of the population in the area at the time lived in yaodong, artificial caves in loess cliffs, many of which collapsed during the catastrophic occurrence, with great loss of life.

Modern estimates, based on geological data, give the earthquake a magnitude of approximately eight on the moment magnitude scale. While it was the most deadly earthquake and the fifth deadliest natural disaster in history, there have been earthquakes with higher magnitudes. Aftershocks continued several times a month for half a year.

An account written at the time says:

"In the winter of 1556 AD, an earthquake catastrophe occurred in the Shaanxi and Shanxi Provinces. In our Hua County, various misfortunes took place. Mountains and rivers changed places and roads were destroyed. In some places, the ground suddenly rose up and formed new hills, or it sank in abruptly and became new valleys. In other areas, a stream burst out in an instant, or the ground

broke and new gullies appeared. Huts, official houses, temples and city walls collapsed all of a sudden."

3. Bhola Cyclone - 1970, Bangladesh [Deaths: 500,000 - 1,000,000]

The 1970 Bhola cyclone was a devastating tropical cyclone that struck East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) on November 12, 1970. It was the deadliest tropical cyclone ever recorded, and one of the deadliest natural disasters in modern times. Up to 500,000 people lost their lives in the storm, primarily as a result of the storm surge that flooded much of the low-lying islands of the Ganges Delta. The Pakistani government was severely criticized for its handling of the relief operations following the storm, both by local political leaders in East Pakistan and in the international media.

The cyclone intensified into a severe cyclonic storm on November 11, and began to turn towards the northeast as it approached the head of the Bay. A clear eye formed in the storm, and it reached its peak later that day with sustained winds of 185 km/h (115 mph). The cyclone made landfall on the East Pakistan coastline during the evening of November 12, around the same time as the local high tide.

2. Yellow River Flood - 1887, China [Deaths: 900,000 - 2,000,000]

The Yellow River (Huang He) in China is prone to flooding, due to the broad expanse of largely flat land around it. The 1887 Yellow River floods devastated the area, killing between 900,000-2,000,000 people. It was one of the deadliest natural disasters ever recorded. For centuries, the farmers living near the Yellow River had built dikes to contain the rising waters, caused by silt

accumulation on the riverbed. In 1887, this rising seabed, coupled with days of heavy rain, overcame the dikes, causing a massive flood. The waters of the Yellow River are generally thought to have broken through the dikes in Huayankou, near the city of Zhengzhou in Henan province.

Owing to the low-lying plains near the area, the flood spread quickly throughout Northern China, covering an estimate 50,000 square miles, swamping agricultural settlements and commercial centers. After the flood, two million were left homeless. The resulting pandemic and lack of basic essentials claimed as many lives as those lost directly by the flood itself.

1. Yellow River Flood - 1931, China [Deaths: 1,000,000 - 4,000,000]

The 1931 Yellow River flood (Huang He flood) is generally thought to be the deadliest natural disaster ever recorded, and almost certainly of the twentieth century (when pandemics are discounted). Estimates of the number of people killed in the 1931 flooding range from 1 to 4 million. Deaths caused by the flooding include but are not limited to drowning, disease, ensuing famines, and droughts. Lesser population densities in pre-historic times make it unlikely that this toll had previously been surpassed.

Between July and November, some 88,000 sq km of land were completely flooded, and about 21,000 sq km more were partially flooded. The river is often called "China's sorrow" because millions of people have been killed by flooding.

Source: <http://listverse.com/nature/top-10-deadliest-natural-disasters/>
Published on September 7, 2007 -

ADVENTURERS & PATHFINDERS



The Pathfinder pledge says,

By the grace of God,
I will be pure and
kind and true.
I will keep the
Pathfinder Law.

I will be a servant of God
and a friend to man.

A study of ecology and the environment will give Pathfinders a better understanding of becoming "a servant of God", helping to take care of the earth that He has entrusted us with.

It is our hope that as we focus on ecology and the environment this quarter you will take some time to review the three honors we have chosen to highlight this quarter.

ECOLOGY

General Conference

Year of introduction: 1972



1. Construct a diagram of a fresh-water pond ecosystem with pasted-on animal cutouts.
2. Pick one mammal, one bird, one reptile, and one amphibian from your home environment; and for each, construct a diagram of its ecological pyramid.
3. Know the meaning of the following terms:
 - a. Ecology
 - b. Community
 - c. Food chain
 - d. Commensalism
 - e. Ecological succession
 - f. Plankton
 - g. Conservation
 - h. Climax community
 - i. Eutrophication
 - j. Biome
4. Make detailed field observations and library book study of the habitat of some small animal in your own environment. Write a report one-half from your field observations and one-half from your book study. Length: about 700 words.
5. Define an ecosystem and state what the basic biological and physical factors are that keep it a balanced system.
6. Investigate the disposal of trash in your community. How much is disposed per family per day? Per week? Per year? How better can it be taken care of?
7. Check the daily paper of nearest large city for one month for the air pollution level. Plot a curve for this level on graph paper for the month. Find out what caused the peaks in your curve.
8. List ten ways in which you might actively work to improve the environment in which you live. Put four of these into practice.
9. Find a Spirit of Prophecy quotation and a Bible text pertinent to ecology and be able to explain their relevance and application to our day.

Skill Level 2

ECOLOGY ADVANCED

General Conference

Year of introduction: 1972



1. Already have the Ecology Honor
2. State the first and second rules of thermodynamics and explain how they are important to ecology.
3. Explain the three basic trophic (feeding) levels and give a good example of a plant or animal for each.
4. Explain or diagram the three types of ecological pyramids in the food web. Give an example of each layer of the pyramid.
5. Define the biogeochemical cycle and explain or diagram all the basic components the cycle passes through.
6. Diagram or explain the basic steps in the flow of energy through the biotic environment (element) of an ecosystem. Begin with the sun.
7. Explain Liebig's Law of the minimum and Shelford's Law of tolerance, and state how these laws tell us how and why certain plants and animals become endangered or are eliminated when their habitat or community gets disturbed or out of balance.
8. Choose a biological community in your area such as a forest or woods, a swamp, lake or pond, pasture or meadow grassland, a canyon or creek woods, etc., that is disturbed or ecologically out of balance in some way. Make a description of it, including how and to what extent it is disturbed. Then make recommendations as to how the community could be improved, and where possible follow through and help to improve it in some way.
9. Spend a minimum of 20 hours doing active, productive work on an ecology project in your area. This may be done individually or as a group. Describe the project in general but report specifically on your part in it.
10. Define: community, raw materials, photosynthesis, chemosynthesis, autotrophy, heterotrophy, ecological balance, saprobe, decomposer, producer, consumer, limited factor.

NOTE: These requirements may be expressed either verbally or in writing to a youth leader. An instructor is recommended but not required for this honor. Counsel with your youth leader or instructor before beginning requirements 8 and 9.

Skill Level 3

ENDANGERED ANIMALS

North American Division
Year of introduction: 2005



1. Define the following terms:
 - a. Endangered
 - b. Extinct
 - c. Habitat
 - d. Biome
 - e. Food chain
 - f. Poacher
2. Write Genesis 1:28 in your own words.
3. List four factors that have caused animals to become endangered.
4. Name four animals that are now extinct.
5. List four things that are being done to save endangered animals.
6. List four activities you can do to help wild animals.
7. List ten endangered animals. Tell where they live and why they have become endangered.
8. Do two of the following activities:
 - a. Visit a zoo or animal preserve that has one or more endangered animals in residence. List what animal(s) you saw, where they normally live, and why they have become endangered.
 - b. Watch a video about an endangered animal. List what animal(s) you saw, where they normally live, and why they have become endangered.
 - c. Choose an endangered animal and write or give orally a short report about it. Tell where it normally lives, why it has become endangered, what is being done to save it, and any other special details about this particular animal that you have learned.
 - d. Make a scrapbook about endangered animals. This may include newspaper articles, stories, pictures, stamps, or drawings. This may be a group project.
 - e. Do an environment circle.

Skill Level 2

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

General Conference
Year of introduction: 1973



1. What is the difference between ecology and environmental conservation?
2. Write a 500-word essay on how the increase in human population is threatening our existence on earth.
3. What does the term “death” of a lake or river mean? Is there a lake or river in your area or country that is classified as “dead”?
4. Carry out a stream investigation of a small stream flowing through or near your home town. Check for the following:
 - a. **Signs of Purity**
 - i. Abundance of small fish present
 - ii. Water visually clear and fresh smelling
 - iii. Stream banks covered with vegetation down to water’s edge
 - iv. Small amounts of green algae in water (light green in color)
 - v. Some aquatic plants present such as cattails, arrow leaf, or pickerel weed
 - vi. Turtles present in the stream
 - vii. Crayfish under stones in the stream
 - viii. Sandbars covered with growing weeds indicating relatively stable water level
 - b. **Signs of Stream Deterioration and Death**
 - i. Large masses of blue-green algae present (dark green in color)
 - ii. Scoured banks from high water level during storms
 - iii. Putrid smell of the water
 - iv. Detergent foam present
 - v. Trash sticking out of mud and sand bars along the stream
 - vi. Water loaded with silt
 - vii. No aquatic insects or fish present
 - viii. Presence of raw sewage
 - ix. Presence of oil on surface of the water
 - x. No salamanders or frogs under rocks along stream bank
 - xi. Stores or small factories dumping their wastes into the stream
5. If your stream is showing some of the above signs of death, do something about cleaning it up. Talk to the people responsible for its contamination or pollution. Most people don’t think about such things and are only too glad to cooperate if made aware of the situation. Organize a group of young people to help you to clean up the trash along your stream. Get businessmen to supply trucks or pick-ups to help your campaign.

6. Make a visit to the city or regional trash dump to see how this waste is handled. Find out:
 - a. How many tons of trash are dumped daily? Yearly?
 - b. What attempts are made to recycle any of this trash?
 - c. Is any of the trash burned or is all of it buried?
 - d. What is the cost per person, per year, for handling trash in your town?
 - e. What happens to junked autos in your area?
7. Make a visit to the nearest sewage plant. Draw and label a detailed diagram of what happens to the liquid and solid wastes from the time they come into the plant until they leave. In what form do they leave? Is any further use made of this waste?
8. Where possible, visit a water purification plant. Construct a flow diagram of the steps in water purification from the time the water enters the plant until it leaves for distribution to homes and stores. Through reading and discussion with water works officials, determine whether water resources in the future are going to be enough to meet the demand.
9. Read and write a book report on an environment issues book such as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*.
10. What are rare and endangered species? Determine what efforts are being put forth to protect such species in your area. What can you do to help?
11. Write a 300-500-word essay on your ideas.

Skill Level 2

Pathfinder Patches: color view



Ecology



Environmental Conservation



Endangered Animals

Habitat

North American Division

Year of introduction: 2003



1. Define habitat and select one to study.
2. Learn about your habitat. Record the day and time you looked at it and what you saw.
3. Name, photograph or draw a picture of the animals, insects, etc that you see.
4. Name, photograph or draw a picture of the plants that you see.
5. Describe your habitat and tell about interesting things that you learned.
6. Find verses in the Bible that tell about your habitat.
7. On which day did God create your habitat?
8. Describe what you think the habitat of Heaven will be like.
9. Create a habitat.

Helps

1. Habitat: Distinctive and characteristics surroundings, such as a pond or deciduous woodland. A habitat is determined chiefly by the vegetation. It can be a woodland area, a back yard, fruit orchard or vacant lot. It can be as small as a tree or a rose bush and even be inside your home.
2. This can be done in one outing, but more interesting if the habitat is visited more than once and at different times of day or night.
7. Genesis 1:9-13.
8. Isaiah 65:17-25; Revelation 22:1-5.
9. Suggestions for creating a habitat:
 - a. Plant flowers that will attract butterflies.
 - b. Use real or artificial items to create a show box scene of the habitat you studied.
 - c. Have the class create a mural that combines all the habitats studied.

A young woman with long dark hair is kneeling in a grassy field, looking upwards with her hands clasped in prayer. The background shows a cloudy sky and bare trees. A large red banner is overlaid on the top left of the image.

**2009 YOUTH
WEEK OF PRAYER**

March 21-28

**A WEEK-LONG
EXPERIENCE
CHALLENGING
YOUTH AND
YOUNG ADULTS
TO LIVE
BEYOND
THEMSELVES**

refuel. regroup. refocus.