

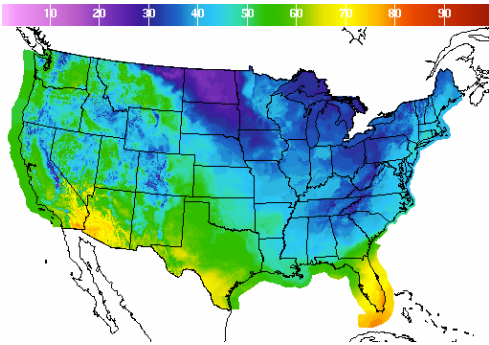


BLESSED EARTH

Serving God, Saving the Planet

MARCH 2010 NEWSLETTER || WWW.BLESSEDEARTH.ORG || VOL. 2, NO. 3

Will Spring Ever Come?



“Have we reached a critical mass with the church caring about God’s creation?” This is a question that I’m asked and that I ponder myself. We often find it difficult to appreciate what God is doing in respect to our own lives, much less the church as a whole. It is somewhat like this winter, which seems to be going on forever here in Kentucky. Will spring ever come?

The answers to both questions can be difficult to discern if we

only look at a small amount of time. On a given day when it is overcast and cold, and the ten-day forecast shows more of the same, the reality of daffodils seems a fantasy. Yet without us realizing, the earth is moving a million and a half miles a day around the sun. For those of us in the northern hemisphere, spring gets 11 million miles closer each week. (Sorry to our mates in Australia.)

I pray and believe that God is similarly propelling the Church toward a “springtime” in the conversation on caring for the earth. At times it can seem discouraging: although Christians have a clear mandate to care for creation, the church has been on the sidelines for too long. But things are changing. I see signs everywhere I travel--in churches, in schools, and in homes across America and the world.

As thousands of you become involved in Blessed Earth’s worldwide April 21 Hope for Creation simulcast, we will witness the church moving into a new and critical role--actively transferring our faith on Sunday to our lives on Monday.

So if you just happen to be someone in a snowy place who is working to inspire your church--have faith! Spring is on the way. Do your part by signing up for the simulcast today, and encouraging others in your work, school, and church networks to do the same.



Your brother in Christ,

Matthew Sleeth, MD
Executive Director

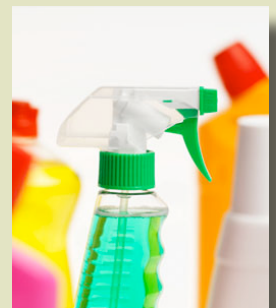
Creation Care Scripture

“I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.”

Psalm 27:13

Creation Care Tip of the Month

Use non-toxic cleaning products for spring cleaning. Cleaning products are everywhere in our homes and offices: on dishes, countertops, furniture, clothes, floors, windows, and floating through the air. In our war on dirt and germs we may often actually be making things worse. Using non-toxic cleaning recipes is simple, effective, and fun!



Letters from You

Finding God's Garden in Our Garden

A young couple embraces biblical call to care for the earth

By **Tony Grace**
Contributing Writer

After hearing Dr. Matthew Sleeth speak about creation care and how much God was embodied in nature, we (my wife along with the other couple we live with in our communal house) decided to implement some sustainable changes so we would live more simply. We began several experiments, including learning how to compost, make cheese, collect rainwater, buy local, eat whole foods, decorate naturally and concoct homemade cleaning products. The Sleeths even let us use their pressure cooker so we could learn the art of canning the tomatoes from our garden.

Ah, yes, the garden: the embodiment of how we were going to connect ourselves better with caring for creation. Our goal was an organic, heirloom, chemical-free garden. We had grown a garden once before and thought we could handle going au natural. (Deep sigh.) Little did we know that keeping things natural is actually a lot of work! Yet, we persevered through our own ignorance and reaped more benefits than we ever imagined! Some surprise volunteer pumpkins, tomatoes, and sunflowers that we did not plant, thanks to some errors in our composting, allowed a second harvest to unfold. Seeds of truth and fruits of His spirit began to manifest themselves in our little garden. Here is a sampling of the spiritual harvest of our garden:

- God seldom takes the easy way.
- The taste and bounty of the harvest is in direct proportion to the labor.
- Nothing is ever wasted in a garden, not even rabbit chewed vegetables.
- In order to thrive, there needs to be balance. Too much of a good thing really is a bad thing.
- Even fruits and vegetables need relationships in order to flourish.



- In a garden and in life, no matter how much we plan, we'd do well to always leave room for surprises.
- Compost is a holy sacrament. Death and decay are ingredients that are actually needed to produce more abundant life.
- Life is a process. God is in the process. You can't hurry either one.
- Plants and people are alike; neither are meant to be transplanted much.
- Left to itself, a garden becomes chaos. So it is as well with us humans.

We learned about God in so many ways--especially with compost. We watched how God can take something that is rotting, full of decay, and rejected only to transform it into something that is life giving, nutrient rich, and sought after given a little time, heat, and attention. Yes, His invisible attributes are truly made visible in nature.

I know that God can take the decaying things in my life and transform them into a life-affirming seed bed if I am willing to give them over to Him -- because I have watched it happen in my backyard. So, with much anticipation, we look forward to the next growing season, where another dual harvest is sure to come.

***Tony and Kelly Grace**, along with their two cats, share their home with another family of three in Wilmore, KY. Kelly will graduate from Asbury Theological Seminary in December with a MDiv. degree. Tony carools to his job at the University of Kentucky where he works as an academic advisor. Both Tony and Kelly enjoy the outdoors and reading about how to live a more sustainable, healthy and value-based lifestyle.*

Prayer & Praise

- Hundreds of churches are signing up for the April 21 simulcast, from as far away as Uruguay and Australia.
- Northland Church, which is hosting the simulcast, is surpassing all expectations--their entire team is dedicated to excellence, in service of God!
- Asbury Seminary, one of our major partners, continues to amaze us with their support, encouragement, and outreach. We are especially grateful that Dr. Ellsworth Kalas--President emeritus of Asbury Seminary, author of 40 books, and beloved hermeneutics professor--has graciously agreed to write sermon outlines for the Hope for Creation film series. Praises for completion of the 12-film creation care series -- Hope for Creation and Hope for Humanity. Thank you to Dot&Cross, creators of the NOOMA films, for partnering with us to create this visually stunning series with state-of-the-art graphics and a compelling message. More like The Matrix than your typical church curricula, we can't wait to share it with the world!
- For every friend of Blessed Earth to share the simulcast with their personal, work, and church networks.
- For thousands of additional churches, campuses, denominations, organizations, and individuals to sign on for the simulcast.
- For the world to see the Church united on April 21, 2010, celebrating the scriptural call to steward God's creation.
- For an even greater measure of God's grace to fill our work and families.

SPEAKING EVENTS



MARCH 2010

Belmont College

Nashville, TN

Mar. 03

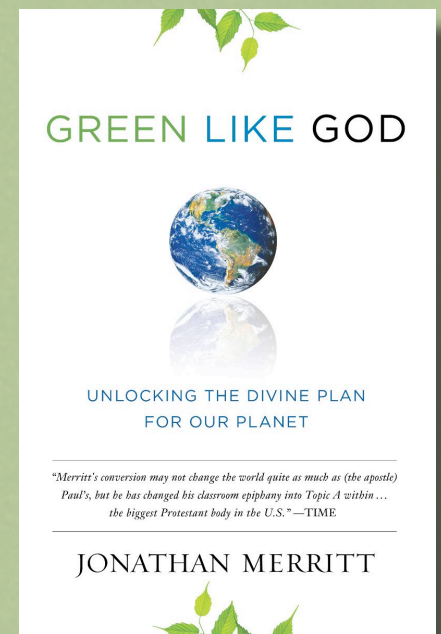
**Full speaking calendar available at BlessedEarth.org.*

To request a speaking event, contact speaking@blessedearth.org

Blessed Earth Resource of the Month

'Green Like God: Unlocking the Divine Plan for Our Planet'

Jonathan Merritt, a dear friend of Blessed Earth, weaves together surprising biblical truths with his environmental journey that has placed him on the front line of the creation care movement.



OUR MISSION

Blessed Earth is an educational nonprofit that inspires and equips faith communities to become better stewards of the earth. Through outreach to churches, campuses and media we build bridges that promote measurable environmental change and meaningful spiritual growth.

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