

BLESSED EARTH

Serving God, Saving the Planet

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With spring come opportunities for stewardship

Friends,

Spring! A season of planting seeds and growing hope. A time of strengthening communities and enjoying God's glorious creation.

A few weeks ago, I helped plant several thousand saplings in eastern Kentucky. This land had been devastated by rapacious coal mining; in twenty years, it will once again be a living forest, teeming with oaks, ash, and (God willing) American chestnuts. Just as important as the five acres that fifty volunteers planted alongside me was the sense of community and joy that filled our hearts.

I nearly missed taking part in another, smaller reforestation effort last weekend--organized by Mary, our "retired" neighbor and indefatigable Blessed Earth supporter. I had been planting cucumber and squash seeds when a friend came by, reminding me that I was supposed to speak at an Arbor Day celebration scheduled to begin in the town park--fifteen minutes ago! So, with dirt-encrusted fingernails and gardening clothes, I dashed off to the town green to share what the Bible has to say about trees. Participants in the celebration ranged from eighteen months to eighty-plus years, yet we all felt joyously bound together by a shared love for God and the trees He created.

A third community-building event occurred on our front yard. When I asked a few friends if they would be interested in sharing a local, grass-fed, hormone- and



Pictured: Dr. Matthew and Nancy Sleeth

antibiotic-free cow, demand was so high we ended up doubling the order. My family does not eat much meat these days--we only kept 20 of the 1100 pounds delivered--but this gathering was about much more than local food sources: the friendships that sprang up as we sorted the beef will last long after our freezers are empty.

Throughout the spring, my favorite times are spent obeying God's first commandment (Genesis 2:15)--to tend and protect the Garden. As I work among the vegetable seedlings, neighbors stop by to

chat and weed alongside me. In between the rows of spinach and peas, we enjoy cherished time to be with each other, and with God.

With every blessing,

Nancy Sleeth

Nancy Sleeth
Program Director



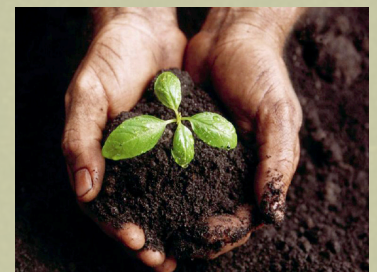
Creation Care Scripture

"May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."

Psalm 72:8

Green Tip of the Month

Composting can cut back on as much as 70 percent of household waste each year. Start your own compost pile today. It's easy, keeps waste from heading to the landfill, and makes for rich soil for spring planting!





Letters from you: Taking the first step

By Jason Parmer

One of the best things about going green is that it's basically free money! I was amazed at Nancy's ability in her Good Steward workshop to make "going green" simple for those of us who have never really thought about living that way at all. She's not a crazy tree-hugging hippy; rather, all of the principles from her Good Steward workshop are practical ways to easily save the earth while saving money. She doesn't tell you to rush out and buy a hybrid, put expensive solar panels on your house, or buy a composting toilet. Instead, she discusses simple, practical things all of us can do right now.

I've found that even implementing one of her great ideas a week saves me money and has put me on a path to better wellness. I've found that I'm naturally eating healthier, being more active, and being a better steward of my money and possessions. I think that's the point: once you see the benefits of being a good steward in one area, taking care of other areas is a natural by-product.

One of the first things I implemented was re-weatherstripping my front door. Previous-

ly, there had been a 10° difference between rooms in my house, and after spending just \$20 on supplies, that difference is 2-3°. That'll save me hundreds--especially with today's ever-increasing energy costs!

I also can't say enough about the Sleeths and their commitment to helping those of us "newbies" get started. I've emailed Nancy several times with questions ranging from better composting practices to downsizing my "stuff" to developing community gardens. I'm eager to see what God has in store for all of us in the months and years to come through their unique calling! ☺

To write a letter to Blessed Earth, please contact willsears@blessedearth.org.



Pictured: Jason Parmer

Easy Money-Saving Tips!

- Stop driving to places where it's easy to walk or ride your bike.
- Meet with your pastor to discuss simple ways to "green up" your church, like starting a food exchange.
- Start hanging out your clothes to dry -- even if it's only once a week!
- Cut back on fast food and cook at home.
- Buy local foods and goods!

Prayer & Praise

☺ The blessing of good health and transformational work for our daughter Emma and her friend Val, as they finish four months of providing palliative and hospice care to the poor in Chennai, India.

☺ A time of restoration and physical rest for Matthew, as he recovers from his arduous travels.

☺ The completion of a new live-capture DVD, which will allow us to share Matthew's creation care message far beyond the audiences we can ever possibly visit in person.

☺ For the Sabbath day of rest to become a priority among all our Blessed Earth friends, so that we can all "be still and know" our outrageously generous Creator.

MEDIA & SPEAKING EVENTS



May 2

Little Rock, AR
Dr. Matthew Sleeth
GreenFaith Conference
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.,
\$40 Registration

May 12

Wilmore, KY
Nancy Sleeth
Beeson Scholars Program at
Asbury Theological Seminary
CLOSED EVENT

May 13

Nicholasville, KY
Nancy Sleeth
Rotary Club
of Nicholasville
CLOSED EVENT

May 14, 15

Duluth, GA
Dr. Matthew and
Nancy Sleeth
Flourish Conference
See website for details

Going green can change the heart

We need your stories! Every week, people share with us the impacts of what taking care of God's creation has done for their families, their communities and their own spiritual lives.

The Blessed Earth website will soon feature testimonies of lives that have been radically altered by choosing to subtract "stuff" and add God and community.

If you'd like to submit your own story, please e-mail us. We'll respond and let you know when your testimony will be featured!



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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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