



# BLESSED EARTH

*Serving God, Saving the Planet*

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## Thankful for life ‘beyond the trends’

Dear Friends,

Last month, when I spoke at the Catalyst conference in Atlanta, I came across a study called “Beyond the Trend.” The premise is that while trends may govern the world, they don’t have to rule our lives. I could not agree more. We do not have to ignore the fourth commandment, just because the rest of the world does not honor the Sabbath. We do not have to be ruled by our cell phones, social media, and advertising; instead, we can choose to be in this world, not of this world.

I found two trends noted in the report to be of particular interest. One trend is that Christianity will continue to expand its definition of neighbor. Through the teachings of Jesus, our sphere of empathy is expanding to include not only people of all colors and races, but the entire cosmos—the natural world that God created and entrusted in our care. According to the report, protecting animals, habitats, mountains, and rivers is likely to get a wider Christian hearing in the coming decades.

The second trend relates to the spiritual dimension of technology. At the center of Christianity is the relationship of man and God. In recent years, this core has been expanded to include relationships between nature, man, and God. But a third-order relationship is also beginning to emerge: What is the proper relationship between technology, nature, man, and



Above: Dr. Matthew Sleeth

God? A Bluetooth connected to our ear is a millimeter away from an implant. How many hundreds of text messages does a person have to send a day to become distracted from family, relationships, and God? In the past, medical technologies have been used to restore function; will Christians draw a line at technologies that enhance function? Tomorrow there will be new inventions, and the day after even more. If God is absent from discussions on the ethics of emerging technologies, then who will provide our moral compass?

These are the kinds of questions we are asking ourselves at Blessed Earth, and the kinds of answers we want to

continue exploring with you. Thank you for sharing the journey with us into this Brave New World—a world that can and should be centered on loving God and our neighbors by caring for His creation.

Your brother in Christ,

**Matthew Sleeth, MD**  
Executive Director

*Beyond the Trend: A Review of Leadership Thought and Practices, Vol. 5, a Catalyst-Q Collaboration, 2009.*

### Creation Care Scripture

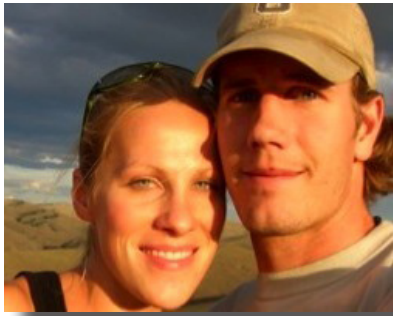
“O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever!”

**Psalm 118:1**

### Creation Care Tip of the Month

Look for someone in your area to invite for Thanksgiving dinner -- a young couple with no family nearby, an elderly friend, or next-door neighbors. Thank them for what they have meant to you and your family.





**By Eric Krawczyk**  
Contributing Writer

# LETTERS FROM YOU



*“Just as the sun allows no darkness  
the lake allows no dryness  
the wind allows no calm  
the river, no silence...  
The Earthship allows no poverty.”  
—Michael Reynolds*



During a record winter in 2007, my wife and I bundled up to go hear Matthew Sleeth share his Christian plea for creation care at our Community Church in Gunnison, CO. His message was instrumental to awakening God’s next calling on my life. For the first time, my years of work, study, relationships and travel among environmental communities found an alignment with my Christian worldview. The validation of this shared platform has sent me on quite the journey over the last few years. From celebrating our carbon-neutral wedding to organizing a local creation care ministry, we’ve been challenged and blessed by our obedience to God.

Caring for God’s creation has become one of the biggest joys in my life. While on our honeymoon in Costa Rica, Casey and I decided to build an Earthship in which to raise our family. We encountered the radical design in Taos, NM, early on in our relationship. Earthships are sustainable vessels that remind me of Noah’s ark. They provide everything we need to survive “the storm” from our culture’s poor stewardship as well as a way to worship God by living in sync with creation. They heat and cool naturally via solar/thermal dynamics, collect their own power from the sun and wind, harvest their own water from rain and snow, contain and treat their own sewage on site, produce a significant amount of food and are constructed by using the byproducts of modern society like cans, bottles and tires. These performance achievements are incredible for Gunnison, CO, the coldest city (on average) in the lower 48 states and located within the most stringent state water laws in the country. We excitedly shared our project through our local creation care ministry and our church.

A tipping point of climate change awareness in our county, or maybe the recent release of a Hollywood interpretation of Noah’s Ark, seemed to provide the necessary means to secure building permits and we began construction this past summer. Volunteers

from our community offered support, but lending institutions presented the biggest challenges. After seven months of toiling with local, state and national banks amidst a depressed economy, we accepted the reality that we would need to seek private investors or facilitate the emergence of an alternative exchange system.

With no investors in sight we decided to organize a local Common Good Bank, a sensible economic system developed by the nonprofit organization, “Society to Benefit Everyone”. We believed that, if others are to answer their creation care calling, they would need a bank that would fund projects or businesses that take stewardship of God’s creation seriously. Common good banks are designed to balance benefit to individuals with equal benefit to the greater good. By “Common Good”, I mean the well-being of each person beginning with those most in need, peace, justice, and a healthy, sustainable planet. Churches are not strangers to this kind of stewardship. I believe extending our churches’ compassionate giving and stewardship practices into our local economic culture will provide the leadership and resources for generating resilient and creation caring communities.

The journey of obedience continues as Casey and I return to full-time roles in our public schools while the thread that the Sleeths connected between my two worlds is becoming the fabric of my walk with Christ.

You can learn more about our Earthship Project at [www.gunnisonearthship.com](http://www.gunnisonearthship.com). ☺

*Eric Krawczyk and his wife, Casey, decided to devote their time and efforts into building the first “earthship” home in Gunnison, CO, after hearing Dr. Matthew Sleeth speak at their church. Their education, experience, relationships and values came together when they learned that their Christian worldview was deeply and spiritually connected with environmental responsibility.*

## Prayer Requests

- ☺ Prayers for protection as Nancy and Matthew travel to deliver God’s creation care message.
- ☺ Prayers for the film crew as we shoot the second part of the Blessed Earth creation care series in the Redwoods of northern California.
- ☺ Prayers that a spirit of thanksgiving and gratitude for God’s abundant blessings fills our hearts and homes.

***Would you like us to pray for something close to your heart? Please submit your requests to [prayer@blessedearth.org](mailto:prayer@blessedearth.org) today.***

## SPEAKING EVENTS

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Lee University	Cleveland, TN	Oct. 31
Christ Fellowship Church	Evansville, IN	Oct. 31/Nov. 1
University of Kentucky	Lexington, KY	Nov. 2
Campbellsville University	Campbellsville, KY	Nov. 3
Belmont University	Nashville, TN	Nov. 18

**To request a speaking event, contact [speaking@blessedearth.org](mailto:speaking@blessedearth.org)**

## Blessed Earth Resource of the Month

# Green Tip Sheets for Honoring God's Creation

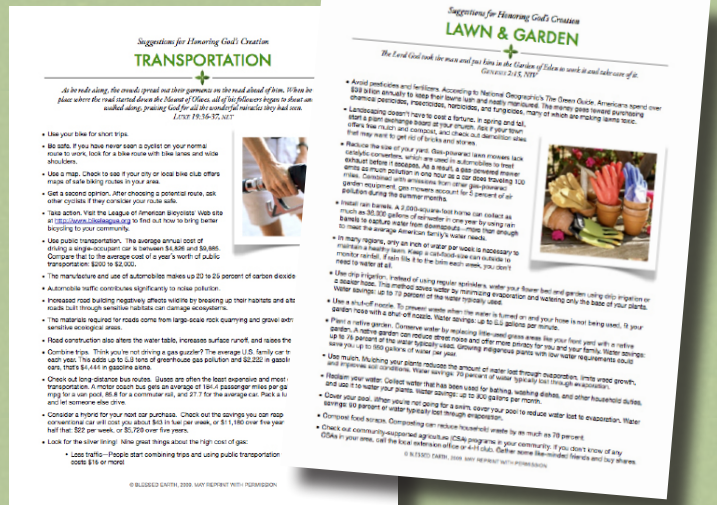
Twelve tip sheets for better stewarding God's creation are now able to be downloaded on our Web site's "Resources and Downloads" page.

### Topics include:

Church  
Entertainment  
Holidays & Special Events  
Lawn & Garden  
School  
Vacations

Community  
Food  
Home  
Sabbath  
Transportation  
Work

Download these and other transformational resources at  
<http://www.blessedearth.com/downloads.html>



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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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