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Jimmy Carter's Environmental Legacy

Jimmy Carter's tumultuous years as president (1977-1981) will be remembered for the peace treaty successfully negotiated between Israel and Egypt, his struggle with an oil embargo-induced inflation rate, the demoralizing Iranian hostage



crisis, and his lopsided loss to Ronald Reagan in 1980. His post-presidency, lasting 45 years, was more impressive as he launched the Carter Center promoting free and fair elections around the world, ending persistent diseases, and supporting philanthropic causes such as Habitat for Humanity.

Historians however, are moving beyond these well-known achievements and failures, with a new perspective on his life and legacy. They are coalescing around the theme that Jimmy Carter's most consequential impact will be his environmental legacy. The primary evidence is that Carter understood and communicated with the American people the essential truth that modern life was created and will be destroyed by, what Rolling Stone writer Jeff Goodell called, "our entanglement with fossil fuels."

Of course, his immediate concern was America's dependence on oil coming from Arab nations and its impact on our economy. But as a trained scientist with a nuclear engineering degree, a prodigious consumer of scientific literature, Carter knew that CO2 emissions were making the earth warmer. In his first year of office, he commissioned The Global 2000 Report to the President, an environmental impact study. One recommendation encouraged

industrialized nations to reach agreement to limit global average temperature increase to 2°C above pre-industrial levels—precisely the standard agreed to by the nations of the world 35 years later in the Paris Climate Agreement.



Aware of the power of symbols, Carter installed 32 solar panels on the White House to

demonstrate that clean energy was available from an inexhaustible sun. At the dedication of the solar panels, he prophetically stated, "A generation from now, this solar heater can either be a curiosity, a museum piece, an example of a road not taken, or it can be just a small part of one of the greatest and most exciting adventures ever undertaken by the American people." Note: Although Reagan took the panels down in 1986, President Obama reinstalled new and more powerful panels on the roof of the White House, where they remain to this day.

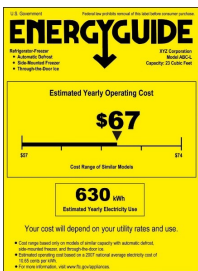


Christians Caring for Creation

(Continued from page 1)

Carter extended federal protection for more than 150 million acres of land, including California's redwood forests and vast swaths of Alaska. The people of Alaska initially hated the act, viewing it as an infringement of their economic capacity to exploit the lands for profit. This opposition became clear when only 26 percent of Alaskans voted to re-elect him in 1980 against Ronald Reagan. Nevertheless, when Carter returned to Alaska in 2010 to give a speech about continuing federal protection for these lands, he was interrupted again and again by applause erupting from the listeners. At the end of his life, Carter considered this legislation his crowning achievement, even more than the Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt.

Carter established the Department of Energy which elevated energy to a cabinet level position. The purpose of the department was to drive America to become energy efficient and independent, upending the economic blackmail coming out of OPEC. One aspect of the department's work



was creating energy efficiency standards standards for automobiles and household appliances. Today, when you go to purchase a car or a refrigerator and you instinctively look for the

energy efficiency rating, you can thank Carter. In all, Carter signed 15 major pieces of environmental legislation in his four years of office, including the first toxic waste dump cleanup in the nation's history.

It was Carter's deep Christian faith which compelled him to act as a steward of God's creation. This man, who taught a Sunday School class at the Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Ga., for over 40 years after his presidency concluded, saw God as Creator and human beings as caretakers of the earth and one another. Growing up on a farm and fishing in local rivers, perhaps, instilled in him an understanding of the connectedness of all things. A subsequent education at the Naval Academy in Annapolis equipped him intellectually for the complementary role science and faith could share. Deborah Williams, an administrator in the Clinton administration, and long-time friend of President Carter, told CBS News, "He has such deep faith. That was a motivation for him to protect God's creation and the resources that God has provided. And we have to be responsible stewards of what we have been bequeathed," she said. "It's just his very core."

This commitment to good stewardship of the earth is still needed among those who follow Christ today. It may not always be politically popular, but it will

always be spiritually right. Jimmy Carter provided the nation a great example of what it means to be a Christian who loves God and neighbor, by loving all creation.



Don Gordon
Founder and
CEO

"Acknowledging the physical realities of our planet does not mean a dismal future of endless sacrifice. In fact, acknowledging these realities is the first step in dealing with them. We can meet the resource problems of the world - water, food, minerals, farmlands, forests, overpopulation, pollution - if we tackle them with courage and foresight."
Jimmy Carter

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Moving Mountains

The following is an excerpt from MOVING MOUNTAINS: Paying Attention to Weather and Climate. Thomas Nisbett. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2025. C3 recently published a podcast with him.

The initial step for a soul to come to knowledge of God is contemplation of nature.” -- Irenaeus

My escape to the mountains became a curiosity to explore. Exploring the mountains improves our understanding of our world and can change our perception of ourselves. My wilderness escape was rather an entrance to the natural world in the backcountry. Understanding begins with paying attention. Awareness is the work of the soul, and you must leave

the cities, the industrial areas, and the financial markets to listen and to see beyond the air pollution and the toxic environments. The rhetoric of the pundits and the lobbyists cloud the issues. Our noisy and busy urban lives cause us to live alienated from the natural world and from ourselves. Mountains awaken us to what is real and what is essential.

On day four of our Kilimanjaro climb, we hiked a half mile up a northward-facing trail with our guide, Makupa, above Karanga Camp at 14,000 feet for a clear



view of Kibo Peak. Looking up toward the Rebmann Glacier at 18,400 feet, we listened an hour or more to the sound of the glaciers calving and crashing down the western side of the great mountain. Was this just a summer melt in the Southern Hemisphere or something else?

Pay Attention.

New C3 Board Members



Marise Robertson has supported environmental issues ever since the first Earth Day back in April 1970 when she was just a kid in school. Care for the Earth and all its creatures were family values passed on to each of her three children.

Marise helped to organize the first recycling efforts in her county in Maryland back in the early 1990s. Now, living in Monroe, NC, she has joined forces with members of the St. Peter Catholic Church’s Care for Creation Ministry. The encyclical, Laudato Si, and the apostolic exhortation, Laudate Deum, continue to spur Marise on

to keep up the faith, hope, and fight for our common home.



Lance Mayes has served as an associate pastor at Woodland Church in San Antonio, Texas, for over fifteen years. He received a BBA from Baylor University and an MA(RE) from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Lance has been married for 30 years and has two adult children. Lance loves

to help people match their passion, gifts, and talents with meaningful service to God and people. He loves working with immigrants and advocating for marginalized people, public education, and other areas of justice and compassion.



C3 Sermon Challenge



The church needs to hear the Word of God proclaimed regarding Christians caring for creation. To

nurture this proclamation, C3 sponsors, for the 5th year, a Creation Care sermon challenge for ministers of all denominations, ages, genders, and ordination status. The challenge is in honor of Mike and Sandy Sigmon.

Criteria and Submission

The sermon should be on the topic of creation care and about 15-30 minutes long. Please title the email "C3 Sermon Challenge." You are free to submit the written manuscript by attaching a document or pasting a

link to the document in the email. Alternatively, you can submit a link (YouTube or otherwise) to a video of you preaching the sermon. We welcome either or both. Submissions should be sent to christianscaringforcreation@gmail.com and received by Earth Day, **April 22, 2025**.

Grading

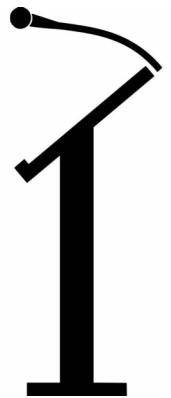
The sermon will be blind judged by a panel of seasoned proclaimers based on theological content, creativity, practical application, and persuasive language.

- Theological/Biblical Content 40 points
- Practical Application 30 points
- Creativity 15 points

- Persuasive Language 15 points.

Award

The winner of the sermon challenge will be awarded \$500. Two honorable mention awards of \$250 will be awarded as well. Sermons must be preached in some corporate setting in order to collect the award. The winning sermon and two honorable mention sermons will also be posted on the C3 website and Facebook page.



Comparison of L.A. Fires and Hurricane Helene



	L.A.	Helene
Human Deaths	25	95
Cost of Damages	\$150 Billion	\$80 Billion
Structures Destroyed	7,000 +	1,000s
Acres Burned/Miles Flooded	40,000 +	400 mi wide x 500 mi long
Forced Relocation	100,000	375,000

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