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Water, Water, Everywhere

by Rev. Rebecca Husband Maynard

“The matter of creation is a holy and living energy born from the hidden depths of God.”

John Philip Newell, Christ of the Celts, p. xiv

I was born by the waters of Darby Creek, not far from where the Schuylkill, Delaware, and Wissahickon Rivers flow, giving life to not only the city of Philadelphia, but also to me and my brothers. Naylor’s Run Creek flowed near my childhood home, nurturing my imagination and shaping my play.

Along the mighty Youghiogheny River near Pittsburgh, my parents were born and raised. My mother remembered how they took their trash down the street and threw it into the river. “The river would carry it away,” she said. Then added, “No one thought about where the river

would carry it.”

Thirty years ago, our family moved to Elkin, North Carolina, where the Little Elkin Creek feeds into the Big Elkin Creek, which drains into the Yadkin River. For twenty years, the river



brought us geese, rising mist, and etched its rippling presence into our children. Now my husband and I live in Thurmond, NC, with a small creek bordering our property. Our pond provides a haven for foxes, coyotes, rabbits, deer, wood ducks, geese, and a solitary blue heron.

Our daughter was married at Three Forks, Montana, where the Jefferson, Madison, and Gallatin Rivers converge to form the Missouri River. Rivers that

helped birth our family’s deep love for Montana.

Genesis tells us that the Spirit of God hovered over the waters, empowering them to bring forth life, sustaining every creature, tree, and blade of grass. That same Spirit-infused water courses through humanity still, as deep calls to deep.

Jesus offered living water to the woman at the well. In Ireland, certain wells are considered sacred because they harbor life’s source. The well is seen as the womb of the earth, birthing new life to all who drink of it. Author Gay Barbizon writes, “To watch water springing from the earth is to witness creation in the act of pure, unconditional generosity.”

Our relationship with water is, at its core, a spiritual matter.





Christians Caring for Creation

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Without water, body and soul remain parched and withered. Our thirst for dominance may tempt us to subdue and exploit water; yet, when we confess our primordial and divine connection with it, and thus with one another, we become its devoted guardian.

Water sustains my body, enlivens my spirit, and flows through my memory. Water birthed me. It restores me. Living water nourishes my soul, keeping it green and vibrant. In the waters within and around me, I am invited to come, drink, and quench my thirst.

“I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds. I come into the peace of wild things... I come into the presence of still water.”
Wendell Berry, *The Peace of Wild Things*

Creation Care as Antedote to Christian Nationalism

There is a fever in the land of America. There is a spirit of fear of other nations, immigrants from other countries, and even fear of dissenting voices within America's borders. One of the chief causes of this fever is Christian nationalism. Christian nationalism is a distortion of the Gospel that merges faith with an exclusionary, ultra-patriotic ideology. I want to argue that the adoption of an appropriate view and practice of creation care is the best antidote to the idolatry of Christian Nationalism.

First of all, creation care is grounded in the biblical view that God created and governs all creation. The Psalmist wrote, “*The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it*” (Psalm 24:1). The Bible doesn't put America in a place of privilege or superiority over any other nation or tribe. And when history con-

cludes with the culmination of the Kingdom of God, all people and nations will be included in the redeemed heaven and earth. John wrote about this vision in the Bible's final book, describing the population as “*every tribe and language and people and nation*” (Rev 5:9). The Bible goes further in explicitly naming Jesus Christ as “*the firstborn over all creation,*” adding “*all things have been created through him and for him*”. (Col 1:15-16) In short, all creation was made for Jesus Christ, not for any singular nation state.

Christian nationalism, on the other hand, promotes the idea that America is privileged, that we are special. Since the 1970s, many Presidents, both Republican and Democrat, have used the words of Puritan preacher John Winthrop to describe America as a “city on a hill” (from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount). Of course, Jesus was not making reference to a future nation called the United States of America. He was calling on the Christian community to be different from the world, not to put their light under a bushel. This position has contributed to the false notion that

America is a Christian nation, despite the fact that her founding documents (The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution) neither speak of Jesus Christ or the church founded by Jesus Christ. The danger of promoting the idea that America is a Christian nation, is that it implicitly, at least, serves to privilege Christianity above other religions or groups that are non-religious. Christian nationalists seize on this impulse to promote Christian beliefs through the institutions of the government. For example, Christian nationalists want to fund Christian organizations (schools) with tax payer dollars rather than fully

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Christians Caring for Creation

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supporting public schools that support an ethos of religious pluralism.

Secondly, creation care is grounded in loving all creation, not just loving America, its lands, territories and citizens. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, it should be noted that the wounded man on the side of the road is ethnically unidentified. We simply don't know if he is Jewish or Palestinian or whatever, but we do know



the one who helped him was a Samaritan, a group of people despised by the purist Jews. Jesus presents this "inferior" human as the hero of the story. He is the one who understood what it meant to love his neighbor. The clear teaching is that we are to love all our neighbors regardless of their status, race, ethnicity, gender, orientation or nationality. Only when we are ready to care for all creation, are we following the ethics of Jesus. Furthermore, it is not an unjustified application to see our neighbors as those who will live 50, 100 or 200 years from the present time. Creation care calls for us to love our neighbors who are wounded and vulnerable, not only

those living today, but those who will travel these roads in the generations that follow.

Christian Nationalism, on the other hand, calls us to "put America first," regardless of the impact on the world. Consequently, if we need more oil and gas, we should certainly extract it, because this will keep us as the world's greatest power. And since God has privileged us over godless China, it is our God-given duty to make sure we have more than they do. This is true, even if we know the long-term impacts of expanding oil and gas production will contribute to an unhealthy climate for people, especially the poor. Rather than working cooperatively with other nations in seeking a safe, healthier climate, we assert our power, our "firstness" in the global race for dominance.

Finally, creation care is grounded in a posture of caring for the earth, not dominating it. The first assignment to Adam was to "tend and take care of the earth," (Gen 2:15) not exploit and dominate it. For all the good the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries did for the world in helping us harness the earth's resources for good, it also nurtured a sense of dominance over the earth, rather than a partnership with the earth. Creation care offers the model of St. Francis of Assisi who valued his brotherhood with creation over Francis Bacon, Father of the Enlightenment, who nurtured the instinct of looking at creation as an object to be subdued, rather than a subject of wonder and adoration. Creation care instills in us a posture of humility and servanthood in relation to the earth.

Christian nationalism, on the other hand, is grounded in an ethic of power, bleeding over into our relation-



ship with the earth. We are freed to use whatever the earth gives us for our pleasure

and purposes, regardless of the long-term impact on the earth as a whole. If biodiversity is reduced, global temperatures rise, coral reefs are bleached out, and glaciers melt threatening ecological harmony, it is merely a necessary consequence of subduing the earth for our country and its place on the world stage. We are seeking short-term returns and will let the future take care of itself. In the meantime, we will exercise our God-given privilege to promote our version of faith, justice and global hegemony.

There is a place for Christians to love their country, serve it and seek its well-being. Respect for the flag and giving honor to those who serve in defending the country is compatible with the Christian faith. But, respect for the flag and love of country can descend into idolatry when power is sought over servanthood, pride overtakes humility, and care for the creation is forsaken in the pursuit of short-term profits. Creation care is an effective antidote to Christian nationalism. Building a strong narrative of creation care undermines the power of Christian nationalism.

C3 invites you to care for creation and oppose Christian nationalism. The two are diametrically opposed to one another. One renders to Jesus and his kingdom, while the other renders to Caesar and his Empire.

Don Gordon
C3 CEO and
Founder



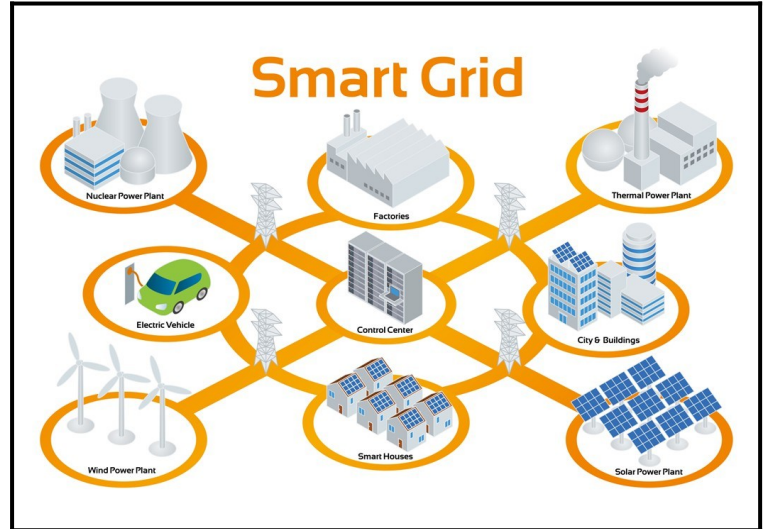


Christians Caring for Creation

Ten Countries with the Cleanest Energy Grid

1. Paraguay – 100%
2. Bhutan – 99.8%
3. Lesotho – 99.3%
4. Nepal – 98.4%
5. Ethiopia – 98.1%
6. Norway – 98.3%
7. Switzerland – 97.4%
8. Iceland – 96.2%
9. Democratic Republic of Congo – 95.5%
10. Albania – 94.8%

Source: Unheating.com



“A ‘Clean Energy Grid’ is a modern high-voltage network of transmission lines offering critical infrastructure for the United States as we strive toward common goals of energy security, electricity reliability, climate protection, and robust and sustainable economic growth.” www.cleanenergygrid.org

Scavenger Hunt for Kids: Finding God in Nature

C3 invites parents to let their kids have a scavenger hunt this summer while on vacation or any other time. Take a photo of where your children find God in nature and send it to us. Feel free to have your child write a short descriptive story of the photo if you like. If you prefer, you could write the story yourself. We ask all submissions to be sent to christianscaringforcreation@gmail.com by **August 15, 2025**.



Finding God in the World Scavenger Hunt: Search for and find any of the following

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|--|
| Beautiful flower | Sunrise | Wild animal (squirrel, rabbit, snake, possum, etc) |
| Unusual seashell | Interesting rock | Dark soil |
| Butterfly | Large tree | Red clay soil |
| Bug | Young tree sapling | Decaying compost materials |
| Sunset | Lovely bird | |

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