

1-1-2018

Where the Desert Fathers and Mothers Meet Permaculture

Brenda Nagunst
bnagunst15@georgefox.edu

This research is a product of the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) program at George Fox University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

Recommended Citation

Nagunst, Brenda, "Where the Desert Fathers and Mothers Meet Permaculture" (2018). *Doctor of Ministry*. 257.
<http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/dmin/257>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Ministry by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfe@georgefox.edu.

GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

WHERE THE DESERT FATHERS AND MOTHERS MEET PERMACULTURE

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF PORTLAND SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

BRENDA NAGUNST

PORTLAND, OREGON

MARCH 2018

Portland Seminary
George Fox University
Portland, Oregon

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

DMin Dissertation

This is to certify that the DMin Dissertation of

Brenda Nagunst

has been approved by
the Dissertation Committee on February 15, 2018
for the degree of Doctor of Ministry in Leadership and Spiritual Formation.

Dissertation Committee:

Primary Advisor: Carole Spencer, PhD

Secondary Advisor: Dan Brunner, DPhil

Lead Mentor: MaryKate Morse, PhD

Expert Advisor: Kevin Bates, DMin

Portland Seminary
George Fox University
Portland, Oregon

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

DMin Dissertation

This is to certify that the DMin Dissertation of

Brenda M. Nagunst

has been approved by

the Dissertation Committee on _____

for the degree of Doctor of Ministry in Leadership and Spiritual Formation.

Dissertation Committee:

Primary Advisor: Carole Spencer, PhD
Second Advisor: Dan Brunner, DPhil
Expert Advisor: Kevin Bates, DMin
Lead Mentor: MaryKate Morse, PhD

Copyright © 2018 Brenda Nagunst
All rights reserved

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi
SECTION ONE: THE PROBLEM.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Fast-Paced Lifestyle.....	2
Disconnected from Creation	5
Conclusion	10
SECTION TWO: OTHER SOLUTIONS.....	11
Introduction.....	11
Solitude	11
Desert Fathers and Mothers	18
Anchorite.....	21
Modern Monastics	23
Shortfalls of Solitude	24
Ecotheology	25
Contemporary Eco-Spiritual Movements and Retreat Centers.....	33
Conclusion	36
SECTION THREE: THE THESIS	37
Introduction.....	37
Restoration of Soul and Soil	37
The Intrinsic Value of All Creation	46
Jesus and Ecological Restoration.....	51
Humanity’s Connection with Creation	57
Permaculture	66
Permaculture Methodology of Design.....	70
Retreat Center	73
Conclusion	76
SECTION FOUR: ARTIFACT INTRODUCTION	77
Chosen Communication Medium: Business Plan and Website.....	77
SECTION FIVE: ARTIFACT SPECIFICATIONS DESCRIBED	80
Introduction.....	80
Artifact Description	80
Audience	81
Goals and Strategies.....	81
Website Scope and Content	82
Resources Needed.....	84
Promotion.....	85
Timeline for Website Development.....	85
SECTION SIX: POSTSCRIPT	86
APPENDIX A.....	89

APPENDIX B	93
BIBLIOGRAPHY	121

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to say a very special thank you to my husband, Craig. He has been my greatest supporter during this process. He's been my biggest cheerleader.

I am also very thankful for the US Military Veteran's Association benefits; without them there is no way I could have afforded to continue my education. Whenever I had a question the VA was always very helpful and encouraging.

My faculty advisor, Dr. Carole Spencer, believed in me when I didn't believe in myself. She is very knowledgeable and used her knowledge to help me learn how to write using academic language rather than being "preachy." She encouraged me when I made a shift in my dissertation focus. I feel like we have kindred spirits. Thank you.

To my cohort members that walked with me throughout this whole program, during the studies and during the writing process: Jamee Free, Laura Howard, Tamara Knowles, Pam Braman, Jacqueline Bland, Janene Zielinski and Madleine Sara. Thank you for cheering me on. You have not only been cohort members, but have become dear friends.

Finally, thank you to the faculty and staff at Portland Seminary. A special thanks to Dr. MaryKate Morse, the lead mentor for Leadership and Spiritual Formation DMin program.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation claims that a retreat center with an eco-spiritual focus is one way to introduce Christians to the connection between stewardship of God's creation and relationship with God. For the purposes of this paper the word "creation" is used to identify the natural world: earth, soil, plants, animals, birds, fish, and humans. Many Christians do not steward the earth as God commanded in Genesis, thus missing a spiritual connection with God that can uniquely happen through creation. This dissertation addresses the question, "In what way is care of creation a critical part of a modern Christian's relationship with God?"

Section One addresses the problem of a fast-paced lifestyle and how that pace crowds out time to build an intimate relationship with God and a restorative relationship with creation. Section Two addresses solitude through exploring the lives of the Desert Fathers and Mothers, anchorites, and modern monastics as a way to hear from God. It also touches briefly on the biblical support of ecotheology.

In Section Three the connection between soul care through solitude and creation care merge. It also addresses restoration of a person's soul and the soil by highlighting the intrinsic value of all creation. It makes the connection between humanity and creation. To address godly earth care, this section will propose the incorporation of permaculture principles at a retreat center for an integrative experience. It addresses the retreat center itself, and how it will combine soul care and earth care.

Sections Four and Five describe the artifact. The artifact is a short business plan, website, and retreat center. Section Six describes the completed project. Appendix A is a

short business plan. Appendix B is a representation of the website, it includes screen shots and the uniform resource locator to the website.

SECTION ONE: THE PROBLEM

Introduction

I had been working to the point of exhaustion; working eighty hours a week was not unusual, plus doing the majority of the household chores and highly involved in church ministry. Every waking moment was filled with ministry work of some sort. I knew the importance of personal quiet time. Every day I read my Bible and wrote in my journal as a form of prayer to God. Journaling is the best way for me to slow down my mind enough to listen to God, otherwise my thoughts wander and I find myself thinking of the tasks for the day. I worked hard, and wore that hard work like a badge of honor. I knew I needed some extended solitude and silence before the Lord, but just couldn't seem to figure out how to fit it into my schedule. After ten years of this, I knew I had to make a drastic change or I might lose my physical and spiritual health. I know it's not God's intention for me to work myself into the ground.

In this chaotic, high-pace life, I took advantage of the modern conveniences without thinking twice about where anything came from, let alone the impact those conveniences were having on the world around me. All of my life I have loved nature and the beauty of God's creation, yet I was not taking the time to really consider how I was caring for creation. I could see evidence of the destruction of creation, but didn't have the time or energy to really investigate what I could do about it. There was a disconnect between my pace of life, my relationship with God, and how I interacted with the rest of creation.

My story is not unusual; sadly, it is quite common. Americans are over tasked, eat unhealthy processed foods, consume more natural resources than they generate, and most

lack intimacy with the Creator and miss the connection between Creator and creation. I wondered if there was a place I could go to make that connection. I wanted a place where I could “detox” from the busy life, to slow down enough to hear God. I wanted to find a place that would help me renew my relationship with God. I also wanted a place that would help me renew my relationship with others and with creation in general. There are places that could meet both desires. However, I was not able to find one with an intentional focus on renewing a Christian’s relationship with God that targeted specific ways of caring for the earth as well.

Fast-Paced Lifestyle

Most Westerners live a fast-paced lifestyle. Each has his or her own way of filling every waking moment with activities; at the very least there is some kind of media input that fills waking and often sleeping hours. According to Sandra Schmidt Bunkers, “The capacity to be alone has been challenged by the modern-day technology craze.”¹ Christians are not immune from this high-paced life, and are influenced as much as the rest of the culture. In the United States, Americans live in a culture that values excess. Most Americans have many more possessions than they need, or even want. Americans fill their houses with these possessions; they over flow into their basements, garages, and sheds. When that overflows they rent storage units in order to keep their possessions and to make room for more possessions. Americans have so many belongings that storage businesses are flourishing. According to SpareFoot Storage Beat, a self-storage blog, the

¹ Sandra Schmidt Bunkers, “The Gifts of Silence and Solitude,” *Nursing Science Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (January 2008): 22, accessed December 15, 2017, <http://journals.sagepub.com/georgefox.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1177/0894318407310756>.

U.S. Census Bureau put out a self-storage construction chart that showed in August 2017 construction spending was \$349,000,000, up from \$172,000,00 from August 2016.² This excess doesn't stop with possessions; it bleeds over into time and activity. Americans value work and recreation: "work hard and play hard." Many work long hours, volunteer for some nonprofit, play or watch sporting activities, and the list can go on. When there is some time alone it gets filled up with activity on social media. There is little to no margin of resources in the Western lifestyle, space is filled with stuff, time is filled with activities, and any spare moment in-between activities is a bombardment of media. Where do Westerners find time to be with God?

Christians are not immune to the busy lifestyle. A twenty-first century businessperson or a pastor may think there is no time for taking away from their busy schedule for prayer, let alone going away for an extended time of solitude, silence, and prayer. Margaret Guenther suggests that the commandment to observe the Sabbath is routinely – even proudly – violated by many who are meticulous in their observance of the other nine.³ She goes on to say, "'Not wasting time' becomes an excuse for neglecting time for true rest and reflection, what the poet Lessing called 'the creative pause.' Most importantly, we can use busyness and crowded schedules to hide from God. Even as we delude ourselves that we are being good stewards, we fill our days so tightly that we close God out."⁴

² Alexander Harris, "U.S. Self-storage Industry Statistics," *SpareFoot Storage Beat*, October 13, 2017, accessed December 27, 2017, <https://www.sparefoot.com/self-storage/news/1432-self-storage-industry-statistics/>.

³ Margaret Guenther, *Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1992), 74.

⁴ Ibid.

Silence, solitude, and prayer are often neglected disciplines in the Western Christian life. It is difficult to take time and find a space where a busy Christian can seek God's restorative and strengthening power through silence, solitude, and prayer. Instead, the cultural indoctrination is to consume all one can consume, such as possessions, knowledge, position, and experiences. The effects of this lack of silence, solitude, and prayer impacts a Christian's relationship with God and their relationship with the rest of creation. Thomas Merton said, "Solitude is as necessary for society as silence is for language and air for the lungs and food for the body. A community that seeks to invade or destroy the spiritual solitude of the individuals who compose it is condemning itself to death by spiritual asphyxiation."⁵

God starts to be considered as a type of "Santa Claus," the giver of requests. Creation is seen as the resource for human consumption, pleasure, and advantage. The results of excessive consumption are seen in the global ecological conditions. According to David Pimentel the earth is experiencing the loss of soil ten to forty times faster than the rate of soil renewal.⁶ Other ecological conditions are the use of chemicals and genetic modification on food, watersheds drying up, increased pollution and waste, climate

⁵ Thomas Merton, *No Man Is an Island* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 1955), 246.

⁶ David Pimentel, "Soil Erosion: A Food and Environmental Threat," *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 8 (February 2006): 119–137, accessed December 12, 2017, <http://dx.doi.org.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/s10668-005-1262-8>, ProQuest.

change, desertification, deforestation,⁷ and decrease in biodiversity.⁸ This can be extremely overwhelming for any one person to consider. It can leave a person wondering what he or she can do and if it would even make a difference. Care for the earth and its natural resources are a matter of consideration for all people, especially for Christians. As people who love God, Christians are to care for all that God created and called good.

Disconnected from Creation

Some blame Christianity for the ecological destruction, mostly due to the industrial revolution mainly taking place in primarily Christian nations. Lynn White states, “By destroying pagan animism, Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects.”⁹ It does make it easier to kill a cow for food when one does not believe a cow is holy, nor a deity. However, this doesn’t mean that Christianity is the primary cause of human disregard for creation. In part, ecotheology may be the Christian attempt to respond to the ecological devastation. Ecotheology is the combined study of ecology—the study of organisms and their environment—and theology, the study of God and religion. Lawrence Troster explains, “I have come to understand eco-theology as the integration of the new scientific perspective

⁷ C. Sudhakar Reddy, C. S. Jha, V. K. Dadhwal, P. Hari Krishna, S. Vazeed Pasha, K. V. Satish, Kalloli Dutta, K. R. L. Saranya, F. Rakesh, G. Rajashekar, P. G. Diwakar, “Quantification and Monitoring of Deforestation in India over Eight Decades (1930–2013),” *Biodiversity & Conservation* 25, no. 1 (2016): 93–116, accessed December 12, 2017, <http://dx.doi.org.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/s10531-015-1033-2>, ProQuest.

⁸ Vance T. Vredenburg and David B. Wake, “Are We in the Midst of the Sixth Mass Extinction? A View from the World of Amphibians,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 105, no. 1 (August 2008), accessed June 5, 2017, http://www.pnas.org/content/105/Supplement_1/11466.full.pdf.

⁹ Lynn White, “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis,” *Science* 155 no. 3767 (March 1967): 1203.

on the natural world with traditional theological concepts, producing a new theological paradigm.”¹⁰ Ecotheology has caused Christians to face an area of shortcoming in their treatment of creation. Ernst Conradie states, “As an academic discourse, ecotheology forms part of a comprehensive reform movement within Christianity. Such an ecological reformation of Christianity implies that there are significant flaws in the Christian tradition – or else a reformation would not be necessary. It also implies that these flaws can be corrected – or else a reformation would not be possible.”¹¹ As Steven Bouma-Prediger points out reformation can start with Christian confession of their part in the ecological deterioration. “We cannot escape culpability for our ecological sins of omission and commission, neglect and abuse.”¹² This still doesn’t point to Christianity as the cause of the poor ecological state. If most Christians were truly living as God intends, in a biblical manner, in harmony with creation, and caring for the earth, then there may not be the degree of environmental problems the earth experiences today. Yet, Christians remain, for the most part, indifferent to the rape and plunder of the world and its traditional cultures.¹³

There are several considerations that contribute to environmental degradation. Due to the increase of human population there is greater demand on the earth’s resources. There are factors that lend to this conclusion, such as deforestation, soil erosion,

¹⁰ Lawrence Troster, “What is Eco-Theology?” *Crosscurrents* (December 2013): 382, accessed April 16, 2017, [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1939-3881](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1939-3881).

¹¹ Ernst M. Conradie et al., *Christian Faith and the Earth: Current Paths and Emerging Horizons in Ecotheology* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 2, Kindle.

¹² Steven Bouma-Prediger, *For the Beauty of the Earth (Engaging Culture): A Christian Vision for Creation Care*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 58, Kindle.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 58.

desertification, and the depletion of wildlife. Conradie points out that poverty is considered one of the greatest polluters. Yet, he goes on to explain that the most serious environmental degradation and depletion of global natural resources very well could be from the most advanced and affluent societies due to their gluttonous consumption.¹⁴ For example, it is estimated the average household in the United States uses about 400 gallons of water per day, and twenty-six percent of that water gets flushed down the toilet.¹⁵ It is not merely the poor, nor is it merely the rich who impose environmental degradation; it is humanity as a whole.

Agriculture is the primary source for food production in the United States and for much of the world. According to Toby Hemenway, there are two main theories of how agriculture started, both based on the scarcity of food due to the need for greater amounts of food. First was an abundance of food, and with that abundance of food the population grew. Thus, with a larger population and limited natural resources arose the need for agriculture. He called this, “life was good but then got bad, theory.” The second theory is that the food supply was good, but then the temperatures dropped and the land was no longer able to supply the food supply through hunting and gathering. This led to the need for an alternative to hunting and gathering, which became the domestication of plants through agriculture. This was known as, “life was okay then got bad, theory.”¹⁶

¹⁴ Ernst M Conradie, *Christianity and Ecological Theology: Resources for Further Research* (Stellenbosch, South Africa: SUN PRess, 2006): 21.

¹⁵ United States Environmental Protection Agency, accessed April 7, 2016, <https://www3.epa.gov/watersense/pubs/indoor.html>.

¹⁶ Toby Hemenway, *Redesigning Civilization with Permaculture*, YouTube video, 1:12:43, January 6, 2013, accessed November 24, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_y_MleU8iNQ.

Prior to agriculture people were hunters, gatherers, and foragers. The need for food to feed the people initiated large production, and this was accomplished through agriculture.¹⁷ As the numbers of people have continued to increase the need for food also increases while the space to produce food has decreased. The 2012 US Census of Agriculture shows a decrease in the number of farms from 2007 to 2012 by nearly 100,000, and a decrease of nearly eight million acres of farmland.¹⁸ In an attempt to increase food production on fewer acres farming has become industrialized. Production is done by monoculture, single crop, and often uses chemicals for pest control and fertilization, proving damaging to the soil. Farmers know this, and that is the purpose behind crop rotation, but is that enough?

Ellen Davis observed that through single-crop-focused land management people have lost their relationship with the land.¹⁹ With loss of relationship comes a lack of ecological understanding. Norman Wirzba believes, “Physical separation from the land is one form of ecological amnesia that is damaging the world.”²⁰ In reference to humanity’s physical separation from the land, he goes on to say, “Its second form is existential: loss of practical, working relationships that can teach us about our need of other creatures.

¹⁷ Ofer Bar-Yosef, “On the Nature of Transitions: The Middle to Upper Palaeolithic and the Neolithic Revolution,” *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 8 no. 2 (October 1998): 146, accessed October 17, 2017, <https://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/12211496/S0959774300001815a%202.pdf?sequence=2>.

¹⁸ US Department of Agriculture, *2012 Census of Agriculture: United States Summary and State Data*, vol. 1, *Geographic Area Series, Part 51*, AC-12-A-51, May 2014, Table 45. Selected Operation and Operator Characteristics: 2012 and 2007.

¹⁹ Ellen F. Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 103.

²⁰ Fred Bahnson and Norman Wirzba, *Making Peace with the Land: God’s Call to Reconcile with Creation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 33, Kindle.

When we grow food, spin wool or cotton or build and heat a home, we are brought into relationships that can teach us care and respect. We learn how much we depend on fellow creatures for our own lives.”²¹ In other words, human separation from the land results in a loss of a relationship that teaches people to respect and care for creation. For example, consumerism has blinded people to the destruction of the earth and its resources.

Most North Americans have no idea where their food comes from. They may know it comes from a farm, but have no idea of the practices the farm employs in order to produce the food they are eating. An example of this is that most chickens in a commercial egg farm are caged side by side in cages the size of their bodies with a conveyer belt running below them collecting the eggs. In this case the chickens have been reduced to egg producing machines, rather than being considered living creatures. Others have free-range chickens that allow the chickens to roam freely, and there are variations in between the two.

We are also interconnected through food. Wirzba points out, “That eating mattered to Jesus should not surprise us if we understand that eating is the daily enactment of our dependence on other people, the land, and ultimately God.”²² God created a world that lives by eating; and eating what is, or was, alive. “Foods” that are synthetic, or use chemicals, were never alive and not meant to sustain life. Wirzba explains that for most of the Western world food has been reduced to a commodity.²³ There is little regard to the fact that fruits and vegetables are sprayed with pesticides,

²¹ Ibid., 33-34.

²² Ibid., 114.

²³ Ibid.

chickens are raised in cruel conditions, cows hooked up to milk machines unable to move for hours at a time. Wirzba states, “If we hope to live into a Christian vision of reconciliation, we need to recover an understanding of ourselves as creatures in relationship with other creatures, all of us dependent on God.”²⁴

Conclusion

People in Western culture live such fast-paced lives that they have allowed the busyness of life to crowd out time to nurture an intimate relationship with God. Humanity is disconnected from creation, with little understanding of the destruction that is taking place in the natural world. Section Two will show how Christians can grow intimate in their relationship with God and touch on ecotheology and the importance of care for creation.

²⁴ Ibid., 36.

SECTION TWO: OTHER SOLUTIONS

Introduction

In Section One the problem of disconnect between God and humanity and creation and humanity was presented. A fast-paced lifestyle, disregard for the soul, and disconnect from creation were discussed. In this section I will propose some solutions to help bridge the gap between the human relationship with God and the human relationship with creation. To address the relationship gap between God and humans this paper will explore solitude as a lifestyle through the lives of the Desert Fathers and Mothers and the monastic way of life. To address the relationship gap between humans and creation this paper will explore ecotheology and creation care.

Solitude

For the purposes of this paper, “desert” will refer to a metaphoric desert separate from everyday life, a holy place set apart, to discover who you are and who God is. It will also refer to a literal desert, such as the Egyptian desert of the Desert Fathers and Mothers. Going to the desert can create intentional time and opportunity for this discovery. Schmidt Bunkers says, “Being alone provides opportunity to reflect and be honest with our-selves as we examine our experiences.”²⁵ It is in the stillness of solitude and silence, the desert place where a person is able to be cared for and loved by God, hear the voice of God, and discover who he or she is and was created to be. Gene Barrette says this about the experience of holiness, “The holy person is the one who is fully what God

²⁵ Schmidt Bunkers, 23.

created that person to be, and has been recreated in the Holy Spirit.”²⁶ Living the life God intended a person to live is to live a holy life. One way to discover God’s created purpose for a person’s life is through times of solitude and silence when he or she can ask God questions about the direction for their life. They are able to begin to understand how God created them, and to live God’s purpose for their life.

It must be noted, however, just because a Christian decides to take the time to be silent with God doesn’t mean he or she will have a wonderful experience, or even hear the voice of God at all. Their experience might be one of frustration or disappointment due to unmet expectations. In some cases, it may even cause a greater separation in their relationship with God. For example, a person could confuse their own negative or depressive thoughts for the voice of God. In that kind of a situation it is good for the person to seek a mature Christian for guidance and understanding.

There is biblical precedence of those who have had spiritual revival or strength for the task ahead due to desert experiences. As God’s servant, Elijah had a large number of victories and challenges. He went into the wilderness, exhausted to the point of wishing to die. Passed out under a broom tree, unable to go on, an angel woke him and fed him, twice. He was in the wilderness forty days and came upon a cave. It was in this place of solitude Elijah was able to hear the Lord. The Lord was not in the wind, an earthquake, or fire, but in a whisper.²⁷ It was in the desert where Elijah received rest, restoration, and heard God’s voice. The Christian’s need of the desert is no less than

²⁶ Gene Barrette, *Collected Works*, eds. Gary W. Moon and David G. Benner, *Spiritual Direction and the Care of Souls: A Guide to Christian Approaches and Practices* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 65.

²⁷ Elijah’s story is in 1 Kings 18-19.

Elijah's, maybe even greater, due to the pace of life that can often push them to the point of having no more to give.

For a Christian's spiritual formation, solitude, being alone with God, is one key element to transformation and in developing a loving relationship with God. Jesus, the Son of God, knew the importance of time alone in silence and in prayer. On several occasions Jesus went away alone to prepare for a significant event. The first time that was recorded was after his baptism and before his ministry started. Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit to the desert to be tempted/tested. He fasted for forty days and nights, sacrificing his body's desire for food. "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry" (Matt 4:1-2 [ESV]). Green explains, "Jesus was readying himself for his public ministry."²⁸ He goes on to give several other examples of God's people preparing themselves for ministry, "The period of forty days of hardship often indicated preparation for a particularly significant involvement in God's activities, for example: Moses (Ex 24:18; Deut 9:25), Elijah (1 Kings 19:8), Ezekiel (Ezek 4:6). Fasting was often used as a means of focusing one's attention in prayer, disciplining oneself to unite body and soul in a concentrated effort."²⁹

The period of forty days and forty nights has overtones of the people of Israel in the desert, after they had passed through the waters, just as Jesus had been baptized and now led to the wilderness. Jesus's time of solitude in the desert was to prepare before

²⁸ Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin, eds. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 955.

²⁹ Ibid.

beginning his ministry, similar to Israel's time of preparation in the desert.³⁰ Unlike the people of Israel, who were disobedient, worshiped other gods, and lacked faith for God's provision, Jesus was obedient to God. He refused to worship other gods. He remained faithful even without the miracle of manna.³¹

Jesus knew God's provision was beyond the physical needs and desires, as he responded to Satan's temptation to turn stones into bread, "Jesus replied, 'It's written, People won't live only by bread, but by every word spoken by God'" (Matt 4:4 [CEB]). Time with the Father in prayer and fasting gave him strength. Jesus did not need the bread of humanity or the bread of heaven (manna); he knew his hunger was temporary and the Father's provision is eternal. Fasting is still important for Christians today; fasting helps focus their attention in prayer.

Jesus went away to pray in solitude as he prepared for the ultimate sacrifice. "Presumably Jesus had gone 'privately to a deserted place,' in order to pray, after the death of John, perhaps turning his mind to his own approaching passion."³² The need to be in solitude and prayer helps God's children prepare for the hard times ahead, the sacrifices they will have to make. The disciples were not prepared for what was to come. They fell asleep, their bodies were weak, as Jesus "pursued obedience through his greatest test/temptation by praying."³³ Time in prayer with the Father enabled Jesus to accept and follow through with laying down his life for humanity.

³⁰ Michael J. Wilkins, *The NIV Application Commentary: From Biblical Text...to Contemporary Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 154.

³¹ Leander E. Keck et al., eds., *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 8 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 163.

³² Green, Brown, and Perrin, 955.

³³ *Ibid.*, 956.

“Peter went up on the house top about the sixth hour to pray” (Acts 10:9 [ESV]).

The roof was often used as a place of worship and prayer. During his time of prayer Jesus came to him in a vision. Peter was about to be asked to accept the Gentiles, even at the expense of the Jewish laws on eating and preparing food. A Jew simply could not dine at a Gentile’s house without inevitably transgressing against the food laws by either eating something they weren’t allowed to eat, or by eating something that had not been prepared properly. It is not possible to fully accept someone whom you are not willing to share in the intimacy of a meal together. There had to be a solution for the early church.³⁴

Sometimes the sacrifices a Christian is called to make, for the sake of others, may require the person to go against religious rules or traditions. They may be rejected by the rest of their denomination. The Jewish Christians were already considered heretics; this would further separate them from their Jewish peers. It was critical that any changes had to come from God. Peter heard a word from God while he was alone for the purpose of prayer that would impact all of Christianity for eternity. It changed Peter’s thinking about Gentiles; he was to accept the Gentiles because God accepts them. This time in solitude was pivotal for Peter’s relationship with the rest of humanity and with God. His relationship with God changed because his understanding of God changed, God accepts Gentiles.

The rich young man who came to Jesus was faced with the call to sacrifice. He thought he was doing well, and expected Jesus to affirm his efforts. Instead Jesus helped him recognize the area in his life he had not fully surrendered to God, his belongings. He

³⁴ John B. Polhill, *The New American Commentary: Acts*, vol. 26, ed. David S. Dockery (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), Logos.

was not able to give up worldly treasures in order to discover the very thing he claimed to be seeking, to inherit eternal life. The sacrifice of his treasure, a willingness to be detached from it, would make it easier for him to use it for the kingdom of God. Jesus asked him to invest his treasure in the lives of people, specifically the poor. It is much more important to invest in lives through acts of charity, as the rich young ruler was called to do, than it is to keep it for oneself. “Only such generosity and compassion leads a person to be ‘perfect,’ for such is the generosity of God.”³⁵ The rich young ruler was not necessarily called to a life of solitude, but he was called to give up what he valued most, his possessions. Solitude is not the total solution to intimacy with God. Intimacy with God includes the willingness to give up anything that is more valuable to the follower of God, than God himself. Solitude is one avenue in which a Christian can recognize the things they value more than God.

Jesus sacrificed himself to care for people when they weren’t able to care for themselves, by healing the sick, feeding thousands, and dying on a cross. The rich young man has a story of a call that saddened him, a call to sell all of his possessions and give them to the poor. The early Christians sacrificed their way of life for the sake of the Gospel. Jesus and the early Christians spent time in solitude to pray and fast in preparation for the sacrifices they would endure. Even though the story of the rich young man was a sad story, some people have read the passage and answered the call for him.

³⁵ David A. deSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods & Ministry Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 277.

Some have applied Jesus' words literally, sold everything and gave it to the poor in order to follow Jesus.³⁶

Modern Evangelicals may question a lifestyle of solitude, yet it does have Jewish and biblical roots. The Jewish Essenes went to the desert around the first century in order to live a more holy life. Through their decision of desert living the Scriptures were preserved, and are known today as the Dead Sea Scrolls. Elijah spent years in the desert, as did Moses. Jesus spent forty days in the desert fighting the Evil One. Anna (Luke 2:36-38) was a widow and a prophetess who had not left the temple from the time of her husband's death. She stayed at the temple to pray and worship God from the time she was a young woman until she was an old woman. God blessed her for her worship with the blessing of seeing the infant Christ.

Key events with God's people happened in the desert. The people of Israel learned what it meant to be the children of God while in the desert. Moses received The Law on Mt. Sinai in the desert. God uses the desert to speak to His people; in Hosea 2 God rebukes the adultery of Israel with other gods, in particular, Baal. God says, "Therefore, I am going to persuade her, lead her to the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. There I will give her vineyards back to her and make the Valley of Achor into a gateway of home. There she will respond as she did in the days of her youth, as in the day she came out of the land of Egypt" (Hosea 2:14-15 [HCSB]). God used the desert and wilderness to teach them what it meant to be a child of God.

³⁶ St. Anthony of Egypt, in about the year 270, is an example of someone who sold all he had and gave it to the poor in order to follow Jesus. His life will be covered in greater detail in the next section.

Desert Fathers and Mothers

From very early in Christianity, persons have sought lives of solitude for the purposes of spiritual fulfillment. They rejected the ways of society and chose to live in solitude. Some of the earliest were known as the Desert Fathers and Mothers, who retreated from society to the desert. Anthony of Egypt (251-356) was regarded as the first monk to retreat into the desert, though there had been hermits before him. He was born into a well-to-do Egyptian Christian family. When Anthony was eighteen or twenty his parents died, he was left with the family wealth and the care of his sister.³⁷ According to Athanasius, after the death of his parents, he was walking to church thinking about how the Apostles left all they had to follow Jesus, and how in Acts they sold their possession and brought and laid them at the Apostles' feet to give to those in need. Then it happened that the Gospel passage being read that day was Matthew 19:21, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (Mat 19:21 [ESV]).³⁸ He gave away to others in the village the 300 acres of land that was left to him by his parents. He sold everything else and gave most of it to the poor, reserving only enough to care for his sister. Later he went to church and heard the Gospel words of Jesus that said, "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow..." (Matt 6:34 [ESV]). So he gave what he had set aside for his sister to

³⁷ Diana Butler Bass, *A People's History of Christianity* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 702, Kindle.

³⁸ Athanasius, *Athanasius: The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus*, trans. and ed. Robert C. Gregg (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1980), 31.

the poor and placed his sister in a convent to be brought up.³⁹ Anthony took the Scriptures literally for himself.

He was driven, even at a young age, to live a holy life. At twenty years old, around year 270 AD, he abandoned his societal life to pursue God, alone in the wilderness.⁴⁰ Anthony had heard about an old man who had been a hermit from his youth, Paul of Thebes, who was outside a nearby village. “The first Egyptian desert dwellers in the third century had been anchorites or ascetics who lived entirely alone. They foraged for what little food they ate, found water in isolated places, and spent most of their days in prayer and contemplation of God.”⁴¹ They were at this time always attached to a church and a village community. Anthony sought out Paul to learn from him. He visited with several other hermits to learn from them as well. He intentionally worked to acquire each of the virtues he witnessed. For example, he would observe their attitudes and learn from one, graciousness, another unceasing prayer, another freedom from anger, and loving-kindness from another. Then he would return to his own place and strive to unite the qualities of each of these men in himself. He didn’t do it in a prideful or hurtful way, but in a way that made others rejoice over him.⁴² Yet this was not enough for him, he felt he needed to go deeper into the desert. Butler Bass states that for

³⁹ Ibid., 31-32.

⁴⁰ Dale T. Irvin and Scott W. Sunquist, *History of the World Christian Movement: Earliest Christianity to 1453* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2001), 4639, Kindle.

⁴¹ Ibid., 4637-4639.

⁴² Roy J. Deferrari, ed. “St. Athanasius,” in *The Fathers of the Church: Early Christian Biographies: A New Translation*, vol. 15 (Baltimore, MD: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 137-138, accessed April 10, 2017, ProQuest Ebrary.

Anthony to follow Christ meant to physically relocate, to remove himself from what was familiar and to travel to a desolate place to find holiness.⁴³

According to Butler Bass, “Although there had been monks and hermits before Anthony, he was the first to join the geography of the land and its struggle of isolation with the spiritual struggle of the soul.”⁴⁴ While deep in the desert he fought his personal demons. He faced each of the temptations that came to him. This was not a short process; he was alone in the desert for fifteen years, making him about thirty-five years old. Christians today question how living a life of isolation is truly Christian. There is a time and place for being in isolation, to fight one’s demons, to learn what it means to be a child of God. There also comes a time when God may call that person to interact with others in some form or another. Anthony was called to fight his own demons first and then the demons of society, as Kauffman puts it, “No longer content to struggle with his personal demons which he had largely conquered, he set out to defeat the demons that infected his society. He had his friends lock him in a tomb near his village, where he lived alone in the place where his culture believed the spirits who controlled society lived.”⁴⁵

In these early years, men and women came to the desert by the thousands. Anthony did not intend to create a movement; he simply wanted to live a holy life that started the movement now known as Christian monasticism. “They did not have a systematic way; they had the hard work and experience of a lifetime of striving to re-

⁴³ Butler Bass, 702.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 709-712.

⁴⁵ Ivan J. Kauffman, *“Follow Me”: A History of Christian Intentionality* (Cambridge, England: Lutterworth Press, 2009), 5, accessed April 10, 2017, ProQuest Ebrary.

direct every aspect of body, mind, and soul to God, and that's what they talked about. That, also, is what they meant by prayer: prayer was not an activity undertaken for a few hours each day, it was a life continually turned toward God.”⁴⁶ As more and more people came to the desert, each had their own cell.⁴⁷ Then during scheduled times in the evening they would gather together to pray and recite Psalms. Anthony acted as the Abba over these men and women who sought this desert life of solitude.

The Desert Fathers and Mothers learned how to pray. In her forward, of *Apophthegmata Patrum The Sayings of The Desert Fathers*, Benedicta Ward, SLG said of the Desert Fathers and Mothers: “Prayer was not an activity undertaken for a few hours each day, it was a life continually turned towards God.”⁴⁸ A person comes to love the things that God loves while in solitude and prayer, including creation. Solitude and prayer alone are not enough in and of itself to become a restorative agent of creation; there must be action to create change.

Anchorite

During the Middle Ages, the desire to experience religious solitude was expressed through the practice of physical enclosure. One such practice was that of the anchorite. Anchorite is derived from the Greek word *anachoretēs*, which was itself derived from the ancient Greek verb *anachorein* (to withdraw).⁴⁹ An anchoress is the feminine term for

⁴⁶ Benedicta Ward, trans., *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1975), xxi.

⁴⁷ A cell was simply a monk's (male or female) living quarters, a single room dwelling, a prayer chamber. In the desert, it was often a small cave.

⁴⁸ Ward, xxi.

⁴⁹ Mari Hughes-Edwards, *Religion & Culture in the Middle Ages: Reading Medieval Anchoritism: Ideology and Spiritual Practices* (Cardiff, Wales: University of Wales Press, 2012), 3.

anchorite. An anchorite is someone who chooses to withdraw from the world to live a solitary life of prayer and mortification. During the Middle Ages, the anchoress was enclosed within the confines of her cell. This cell was often attached to the parish church, but could have been close to the church; sometimes it was attached to a monastery, convent, or the castle. The anchoress was not cut off from the world, but anchored to it. Her cell or room was small and usually had three windows, one open to the church so she could receive communion, one to give her contact with her assistant who brought her food and supplies, the third allowed her to have access to people who came to seek her wisdom, advice, and prayer.⁵⁰ Julian of Norwich was an anchoress whose writings were the result of years of reflections on the meaning of her deathbed visions. She called the visions “showings” from God. In this showing Julian of Norwich shares that every aspect of creation is loved by God; it exists because the Creator loves it.

At the same time that I saw the head [Christ’s] bleeding, our good Lord showed a spiritual sight of his familiar love. I saw that he is to us everything which is good and comforting for our help. He is our clothing, who wraps and enfolds us for love, embraces us and shelters us, surrounds us for his love, which is so tender that he may never desert us. And so in this sight I saw that he is everything which is good, as I understand. And in this he showed me something small, no bigger than a hazelnut, lying in the palm of my hand, as it seemed to me, and it was as round as a ball. I looked at it with the eye of my understanding and thought: What can this be? I was amazed that it could last, for I thought that because of its littleness it would suddenly have fallen into nothing. And I was answered in my understanding: It lasts and always will, because God loves it; and thus everything has being through the love of God.⁵¹

These words claim that everything has being through God’s love. God used her sacrifice of freedom and of worldly possessions, not because she gave these things up,

⁵⁰ Martin Warren, “Julian of Norwich,” *Virtual Medieval Church and Its Writings*, University of Saint Thomas, 2003, accessed December 6, 2015, <http://courseweb.stthomas.edu/medieval/julian/julian.htm>.

⁵¹ Ibid.

but because of her heart of prayer, and her willingness to share out of the abundance of the gifts of wisdom that God gave her. People are no different today; there is still the need to get away and pray. Solitude gives opportunity to prepare a Christian's heart for the temptations to come, and to recognize the obstacles in their lives that are blocking their relationship with God. Modern Christians still ask God to reveal the things in their lives that they need to surrender or sacrifice for the sake of God, for the sake of their own souls, and the souls of others. Solitude is time to be apart from the routine of modern life. Solitude, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary is "the quality or state of being alone or remote from society: SECLUSION" or "a lonely place (as a desert)"⁵² In solitude is one place where deep reflections on questions like these posed by Father Kevin O'Brien SJ can be considered: "How have I been a 'good steward' of the gifts God has given me, including created things, my talents, and my abilities? From my own experience, what gets in the way of my praising, loving, and serving God? How do the following influence my choices and actions: titles, honors, possessions, career, opinion of others, lifestyle?"⁵³

Modern Monastics

A modern revival of the Egyptian monastic life is going on today that is similar in structure as to when Anthony went out into the desert nearly 1,700 years ago. This movement is influencing the church in Egypt, "Many of the young bishops in the Coptic Orthodox Church today are themselves products of this monastic revival. The spiritual character of the monasticism thus has a direct influence on the shape of the Coptic

⁵² Merriam-Webster, s.v. "Seclusion," *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

⁵³ Kevin O'Brien, SJ. *The Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius in Daily Life* (Chicago, IL: Loyola Press, 2011), 65.

Church.”⁵⁴ There is not only a revival of the Egyptian monastic life, but a growing appreciation among Protestants of the monastic life. People are visiting monasteries and seeking spiritual direction in a similar manner as people sought out the Desert Fathers and Mothers for spiritual direction. Where monastics had once been thought of as irrelevant, they are now considered vital contributors to communities as places of hospitality, spiritual guidance, prayer, and caring for the poor. In referring to the Desert Fathers and Mothers, Butler Bass said, “These ancients taught that prayer was participation in God’s love, the activity that takes us out of ourselves, away from the familiar, and conforms us to the path of Christ.”⁵⁵ For many of those who have committed to the modern monastic life, prayer is still thought of as participation in God’s love, to leave the familiar in order to be like Christ.

Shortfalls of Solitude

One of the modern arguments against solitude is, “How can a person influence others for Christ if they live in solitude?” There is a difference between solitude and isolation. A person in isolation has absolutely no other human contact, whereas a person in solitude has been set apart from the norm of society. People were not created to be alone, in isolation, “Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him’” (Gen 2:18 [ESV]). A person may pull away for a while in prayer and solitude, but there comes a time when he or she must engage with people again. For some, the sacrifice is going away in prayer and solitude, while for

⁵⁴ Anthony O’Mahony, “Tradition at the Heart of Renewal: The Coptic Orthodox Church and Monasticism in Modern Egypt,” *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 7, no. 3 (2007): 166, accessed April 10, 2017, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14742250701535218>.

⁵⁵ Butler Bass, 737.

others the sacrifice is going back out into community. Though God may call a few to live a life of solitude, most Christians will not live this type of life. Christians can, however, create a rhythm of life that includes solitude and community. One way is to get away for a time in solitude at a small retreat center.

When so much excess surrounds people, how can a person tread through it? How do people hear the voice of God? God told Hosea of Israel, “I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her” (Hos 2:14 [ESV]). Silence, solitude, and prayer are counter-cultural for the modern Westerner. Yet, maybe even without realizing it, it may be something people long for. Catherine Doherty said, “It seems strange to say, but what can help modern man find the answers to his own mystery and the mystery of him in whose image he is created, is silence and solitude—in a word, the desert. Modern man needs these things more than the hermits of old.”⁵⁶ Most Christians will not go out into the desert as a call for a life of solitude. However, they still need those desert places for time dedicated to hear the voice of God over the distractions of their daily lives, yet times of solitude do not directly address the disconnect Christians have with creation.

Ecotheology

One way to address the Christian’s disconnect with creation is through the study of ecotheology. The term ecotheology is relatively new. Although theologians started considering care for creation in relationship to God as early as Calvin, it has not been a field of study until about the 1970s. As early as 1974 in reference to Romans 8:19-21

⁵⁶ Catherine Doherty, *Poustinia: Encountering God in Silence, Solitude and Prayer* (Combermere, ON: Madonna House Publications, 2014), 4, Kindle.

Charles Cranfield stated that in this passage Paul takes us beyond treating the environment well merely because we need it. He explains that it has ‘a dignity of its own’ and a ‘right to be treated by us with reverence and sensitivity’.⁵⁷ Bishop Kallistos Ware said, “Human beings are not saved from, but with the material world; through humankind the material world is itself to be redeemed and transfigured.”⁵⁸ Every Christian can be a restorative agent for creation, as opposed to excessive consumption of its resources, hoping Christ will come before the resources run out. What if one way Christ is holding the cosmos together, or at least the earth, is through the restoration of his people? Most people are so anthropocentric that it is easy to not consider the idea of “new creation” to include all creation. In Romans 8:20, Paul refers to the created order, not humanity. Nature is suffering; it is longing for restoration, to be set free from bondage to decay. As those who have been set free from bondage, followers of Jesus can be the solution for the restoration of creation. Through Jesus there is redemption for all creation, not just humanity. Paul sees the nonhuman part of creation as a part of the liberation, not just as if it were an observing bystander.

Through the word of God all things came into existence; God created through spoken word, not out of some other material. Creation, the cosmos, all of nature, and humanity were all spoken into existence by the word of God. The psalmist of Psalm 33 includes a stanza about God’s creation and control over creation: “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of His mouth” (Psalm 33:6).

⁵⁷ C. E. B. Cranfield, “Some Observations on Romans 8:19-21,” in *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology*, ed. Robert Banks, 224-230, presented to L. L. Morris on his 60th Birthday (Exeter: Paternoster, 1974), 230.

⁵⁸ Kallistos Ware, “The Spirituality of the Icon,” in *The Study of Spirituality*, eds. Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainright, and Edward Yarnold (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1986), 197.

And verse nine, “For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm.”

Verse seven tells of God’s control over the waters. Walter Kaiser expounds, “On the whole, the method of creation was as clear as its source: it was God who created, and the method used was spoken word. But word-creation stresses more than method. It emphasizes that creation was in accordance with God’s knowledge as embodied in His word.”⁵⁹

God spent six days creating; humanity was only part of the sixth day. Humanity was made in the image of God, yet God spent detailed time creating the sun, moon, stars, water, land, plants, trees, birds, fish, animals, and the rest of creation. The other-than-human part of creation is important to God. God does not ignore the rest of creation after the Fall of humanity. In Genesis 9:8-17, after the flood, God’s first covenant with humanity included all living things. God mentions all living things five times. In verse thirteen God says that the covenant is between God and humanity and all the earth. The earth is important enough to God to have it included in this first covenant to ensure its wellbeing. Just as all creation received blessing from God in Genesis 1 and 2, it ensued the curse with the Fall of humanity in Genesis 3. This quote from John Wesley’s sermon entitled, “The General Deliverance”, points to this interpretation of the decay, “When man made himself incapable of transmitting those blessings. The intercourse between God and the inferior creatures being stopped, those blessings could no longer flow in upon them.”⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Walter C. Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 38.

⁶⁰ John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 3rd ed., vol. 6 (London, England: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872), 245.

In Romans 8:19-25, Paul exclaims God's intention is not to leave creation in a state of decay, but to restore the creation, "in the hope that creation itself will be set free from slavery to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of God's children" (Rom 8:20b-21, [Common English Bible]). Cheryl Hunt claims that for Paul the purpose behind his exhortation in Romans 8:18-25 is not to address the issue faced today with the environmental degradation, or even the fate of nature, nor the relationship between humanity and the planet. These were not major issues for Paul. However, it can be seen as positive attitudes toward nonhuman creation and their eschatological fate.⁶¹ There is, however, debate about the interpretation of the word "creation" (*ktisis*). "Because he speaks so personally, (e.g., in v. 22, it groans), many think he is referring only to human beings, or perhaps unbelievers."⁶² The more accepted theory is that Paul was more than likely focused on nonhuman creation. According to James D. G. Dunn, this thought is mostly due to the Adam motifs. The reversal of humanity's fall will require, in Paul's mind, the reversal of the curse on the ground.⁶³ In this Romans text, Paul includes the liberation of the whole creation in order to accentuate the importance of the revelation of glory. In a similar manner, this is done by the psalmist in Psalm 65:12-13, "The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy, the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy."

⁶¹ Cheryl Hunt, David G. Horrell, and Christopher Southgate, "An Environmental Mantra? Ecological Interest in Romans 8:19-23 and a Modest Proposal for its Narrative Interpretation," *Journal of Theological Studies*, NS, vol. 59, Pt 2 (October 2008): 548.

⁶² Douglas J. Moo, *The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 266.

⁶³ James D. G. Dunn, *Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 38a, Romans 1-8, eds. Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard, Glenn W. Barker (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1988), 479.

For Hunt, there seems to be a close connection between ecotheology and eschatology.⁶⁴ This connection is being drawn due to the fact people are starting to wonder what kind of earth there will be if this trend of negative impact on the earth continues. Romans 8:18-25 and creation cannot merely be seen through the lens of the current ecological condition of earth. What the passage does offer is, that there was a beginning to creation, and that beginning was declared good by God. There is a middle to creation, it is groaning, and in a state of bondage to decay. Finally, there will be a future to creation, it will be freed from that bondage, not only freed, but transformed.⁶⁵

Restoration of creation is not a new idea for the Jews, “In Isaiah 66:17 and 66:22 the creation of a new heavens and new earth is predicted. The theme of the re-creation or renewal of creation was taken up into apocalyptic literature as the final eschatological act.”⁶⁶ Aune states, “Essentially the expectation of a new creation or a renewed creation is a particular application of the two-age schema in which the first creation is identified with the present evil age (or world) and the new renewed creation is identified with the age (or world) to come.”⁶⁷ Paul doesn’t address whether or not the old creation will be reduced back to chaos before re-creation, but he does give the hope of re-creation for not just humans who are in Christ, but for creation as well. Some Christians would argue that this passage reveals that the current world is doomed and God is going to create a whole new world. This can lead to a “why bother caring for the earth” type of attitude.

⁶⁴ Hunt, Horrell, and Southgate, 548-557.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 557.

⁶⁶ D. E. Aune, *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, eds. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 51.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

“For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now” (Romans 8:22 [ESV]). This does not indicate the complete destruction of this earth, rather that there will be new life, transformation. God does not intend on scrapping creation, throwing it out, and starting over. The metaphor of childbirth indicates new life springing forth, not the destruction of the current creation.

Paul makes this point, “For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God” (Romans 8:19 [ESV]). He uses the word eager twice in order to emphasize this point.⁶⁸ This begs the question, why did God subject creation under the authority of humankind at the Fall? N. Thomas Wright suggests, “God did this precisely in order that creation might point forward to the new world that is to be, in which its beauty and power will be enhanced and its corruptibility and futility will be done away.”⁶⁹ He states that God will send the Holy Spirit to rescue the whole of the created order, not merely humanity, to bring justice and peace.⁷⁰

Douglas Moo claims that the key point Paul makes is that the frustration “creation” is experiencing is not its own fault. Therefore, humanity must be excluded from Paul’s use of the word “creation” since humanity had a part in the Fall.⁷¹ According to Moo, most modern commentators believe Paul is referring to nonhuman creation, plants, animals, rocks, in other words, the natural world, in his use of the term

⁶⁸ N. Thomas Wright, “The Letter to the Romans: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*, vol. 10, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 596.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 596.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Moo, *The NIV Application Commentary*, 266.

“creation.”⁷² Creation falls short of its created purpose due to the sin of humanity. Paul tells the Roman church that one day all of creation will be liberated from its bondage of decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. God connected the fate of creation with the fate of humanity.

Paul saw the condition of the creation as one of yearning and eagerly awaiting the revelation of the children of God. Creation itself being set free from the frustration of decay is intimately interconnected with humanity. Moo goes on to explain that the condition of creation depends on the condition of humanity, and the condition of humanity depends on creation.⁷³

Yet, humanity continues to abuse the environment, and the more the earth is abused, the greater the loss of its intended purpose. The freedom that comes to creation through the glorification of the children of God is evidenced in humans loving and caring for all of God’s creation. Paul is not telling the Roman reader to glorify creation or to worship it. Nor does this mean humanity is to set aside creation as if it is an ornament to be looked at and not touched rather than used, as some environmental extremists might impose.⁷⁴ N.T. Wright puts it this way referring to creation, “It will have freedom because God’s children have glory; indeed, their glory will consist quite specifically in

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ An example of a group that imposes extreme measures is Earth First. In their website they state, “We believe in using all of the tools in the toolbox, from grassroots and legal organizing to civil disobedience and monkeywrenching.” Earth First, “About,” accessed November 11, 2017, <http://earthfirstjournal.org/newswire/about/>.

this, that they will be God's agents in bringing the wise, healing, restorative divine justice to the whole created order."⁷⁵

David Clough, a theological professor at University of Chester, proposed that ecotheology is no longer a helpful label, and that in fact, it should be rejected as a theological methodology or group of methodologies with its own pattern of thinking that cannot be expected in other areas of theology. Rather, there should be a two-way dialogue where ecological commitments are integrated by biblical and theological insights, as well as the other way around.⁷⁶ In other words, David Clough explained that ecotheology should be so much a part of theological methodology that it doesn't need a separate focus. The problem with this is that without ecotheology as its own focus it would be very easy for Christians to become ecologically illiterate. The theological foundation of ecological literacy is that humans are creatures with limitations and make errors, living in a world not of their own making. With this in mind, ecological literacy ought to turn one to thoughtful keeping of God's creation, earth, plants, animals, birds, fish, and humanity.⁷⁷

Currently, maybe more than any other time in history, there is a greater awareness focused on ecological concerns. This is due to the greater awareness of the negative impact humans are having on the earth and its ecosystems. Christians are beginning to study the importance of earth care, as it is not only necessary for human survival, but it is

⁷⁵ Wright, 597.

⁷⁶ David Clough, "Beyond Ecotheology," *Theology* 116, no. 1 (2013): 47, accessed December 15, 2017, <http://journals.sagepub.com.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1177/0040571X12461231>.

⁷⁷ Steven Bouma-Prediger, *For the Beauty of the Earth (Engaging Culture): A Christian Vision for Creation Care*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 5, Kindle.

part of God's created work and is therefore to be treated as God's divine expression.

Between Genesis and Paul's writings, in particular Romans 8:18-25, it is evident that all of creation was declared good by God and all of creation received God's blessing upon creation by God. It is also true that all of creation was affected by the Fall of humanity; the curse experienced by humanity was also given to the earth.

The problem with ecotheology is that it can become an end in itself, knowing the connection between theology and ecology is not enough. Brunner, Butler, and Swoboda state: "In the West, with our privileged, intellectualized, and compartmentalized lives, theorizing and theologizing can become ends in themselves."⁷⁸ The need is to put the theories and theologies into action. The information itself will not cause change; acting on that information is what causes change.⁷⁹

Contemporary Eco-Spiritual Movements and Retreat Centers

There are contemporary Christian organizations that do have an ecological focus, who are acting on the information that causes change. Christians are starting to be more intentional about caring for the earth. A Rocha, meaning "the rock" in Portuguese, is a global Christian organization that is focused on community-based conservation. Their tagline is "Restoring people and places through community-based conservation."⁸⁰ "A Rocha is an international family of Christian conservation organizations. Our mission

⁷⁸ Daniel L. Brunner, Jennifer L. Butler, and A. J. Swoboda, *Introducing Evangelical Ecotheology: Foundations in Scripture, Theology, History, and Praxis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 282, Kindle.

⁷⁹ This is a very brief discussion on ecotheology based on a few passages, to go deeper into this topic is beyond the scope of this dissertation. For further reading and research on the topic of ecotheology, see writings by Sigurd Bergmann, Wendell Berry, Daniel L. Brunner, Ernst M. Conradie, Ellen F. Davis, Celia Deane-Drummond, Pope Francis, Lynn White, and Norman Wirzba.

⁸⁰ A Rocha, accessed February 17, 2018, <https://arocha.us>.

is restoring both people and places through collaborative, community-based conservation.”⁸¹ A person can go to their website and find projects all over the world and can get involved in any way they would like to be involved from donation, prayer, volunteer on location, to partnering with A Rocha with their own project. Though this organization is Christian, it doesn’t seem to have intentional focus on soul care.

Godspace is a website that includes a blog, resources, and opportunity to schedule an educational event. “God space: an invitation to create a pathway to a more vital whole-life faith. Through diverse voices from around the world we seek to inspire readers to notice, explore and experiment with fresh ways to connect more intimately to God, more effectively to their neighbours and more responsibility to creation.”⁸² Godspace focuses on both soul care and care for creation. Godspace does not have an experiential aspect. It does encourage the read to create experience and they do provide seminars, however, there is no hands-on experience, like a retreat, through Godspace.

Holden Village is a camp like experience, located in the Cascade Mountain of Washington. It is a Lutheran ministry; they invite people of all faiths to join them. Holden Village was once a copper mining town, it has been transformed into a place of education in the areas of ecology, art, and social justice. It relies on volunteers for operation, who volunteer for between two weeks and one year. While there they learn the rhythm of God and Sacrament; work, recreation, and study; and intercession and healing.

⁸¹ A Rocha, accessed February 17, 2018, <https://arocha.us/whatwedo>.

⁸² Godspace, accessed February 17, 2018, <http://godspacelight.com/about/>.

Holden Village is community focused, there are quite a few people, and in the summers they can be pretty busy with scheduled events.⁸³

A common thread between these organization is that they are Christian and are teaching people about responsible care for creation. Some are experiential, some are done in community, and some are done individually. Though they are each teaching people about God and creation care, they lack personally guided direction in soul care and creation care at a location that is set apart for that purpose.

Palisades Retreat Center in Federal Way,⁸⁴ is a Christian retreat center that provides year-round programs. They provide venues for a groups or personal retreats. This is a place to get away and be in silence and prayer with a setting that has a view of the Pacific Ocean, trails for a prayer walk, the stations of the cross, and a simple room. Though beautiful, Palisades does not have an ecological focus in order to guide its retreatants on how to personally take better care of creation.

Jenny Tracy, owns a small cottage retreat for pastors. The focus of her retreat is for spiritual renewal and restoration. She quoted Wesley D. Tracy, “The goal of spirituality – and therefore the goal of spiritual direction, spiritual friendship and spiritual guidance – is to help the believer live the life of love, that is, the life of Christlikeness.”⁸⁵ Though in a beautiful wooded setting her retreat cottage has no intentional focus on a retreatant’s relationship with God and their relationship with creation. Some Christian

⁸³ Holden Village, accessed February 17, 2018, <http://www.holdenvillage.org/about-us/mission-core-values/>.

⁸⁴ “Palisades Retreat Center,” accessed December 15, 2017, <http://palisadesretreatcenter.org>.

⁸⁵ Wesley D. Tracy, *Spiritual Direction and the Care of Souls: A Guide to Christian Approaches and Practices*, eds. Gary W. Moon and David G. Benner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 117.

camps provide a private prayer cottage and outdoor nature classes, such as Twin Rocks.⁸⁶ However, prayer and creation care are not combined as a rhythm of the retreatant's stay, each is experienced on its own. At Twin Rocks the outdoor classes are primarily for children. Their classes do not teach ecosystem design; though, they may teach about ecosystems and how to take care of them.

Conclusion

Early in Christianity, Christians have sought to set themselves apart for God. One way they have done this is through solitude, being alone with God away from society in order to pray and seek Him. The life of solitude, though it has been set apart, has had a positive affect on society in regard to connection with God; however, has fallen short in having a restorative relationship with creation. Christians are to care responsibly for creation, yet most Western Christians are consuming just as much as the rest of the population, thus they are just as destructive of creation as the society in which they are a part. Simply understanding that all of creation has intrinsic value is not enough to be a restorative agent. Though there are Christian organization that are ecologically focused, many of them lack direct attention given to the participant by an experienced guide for both soul care and soil care. In Section Three, I will offer a solution where an experience of solitude and responsible natural resource management can be restorative in relationship with God and creation.

⁸⁶ <http://www.outdoorschool.twinrocks.org/classes/>

SECTION THREE: THE THESIS

Introduction

In Section One the problem presented was one of disconnect between Christians and God and Christians with the rest of creation, particularly due to a busy lifestyle. In Section Two solitude was given as a solution to drawing nearer to God through prayer and silence. Ecotheology was given as a first step toward Christians connecting with creation. Each of these, solitude and ecotheology, fall short of the action it takes to restore the effects of excessive consumption, hyper activity, over indulgence in media, and possession indulgence.

This section will discuss the intrinsic value of all creation, Jesus and ecological restoration, and humanity's connection with creation. It will introduce permaculture and permaculture design. In order to connect the two, the author will propose a personal experience at a retreat center. The retreat center will create an environment for building a more intimate relationship with God in a setting ideal for silence and solitude. The retreatant will experience caring for God's creation through the witness and practice of permaculture principles. The purpose is to inspire Christians to make changes in their spiritual lives in the way they engage the world around them by better caring for the earth's resources and growing in intimacy with God.

Restoration of Soul and Soil

Though silence, solitude, and prayer may be counter-cultural for modern Christians, they are vital for spiritual health and transformation. Dallas Willard explains that silence and solitude are vital to spiritual transformation, "The wrung habits of mind,

feeling, and body are keyed so closely and so routinely to the social setting that being alone and being quiet for lengthy periods of time are, for most people, the only way they can take the body and soul out of the circuits of sin and allow them to find a new habitual orientation in the Kingdom of the Heavens.”⁸⁷ He goes on to say the Christian’s need of solitude and silence gives the strength needed to withstand temptation that would not be possible in the person’s own strength, “Choosing to do this and learning how to do it effectively is a basic part of what we can do to enable us to do what we cannot do by direct effort, even with the assistance of grace.”⁸⁸

In silence, Daniel Wolpert explains, “We begin to let go of ourselves, which allows us to hear God.” He goes on to say, “When we go to sit in silence, when we turn our minds to our Creator, we begin the process of allowing God to be the center of our world.”⁸⁹ Willard explains how the extensive use of solitude and silence is basic for growth of the human spirit; it forms an appropriate context for listening and speaking to God who is not a physical personality.⁹⁰ Silence is hard work because most people are addicted to noise; the noise of human-centered input, both written and audible, from within their mind or from the bombardment of external noise. “The prayer of silence is not natural. Our attempts to pray this kind of prayer will expose how trivial and

⁸⁷ Dallas Willard, “Spiritual Disciplines, Spiritual Formation, and the Restoration of the Soul,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 26, no. 1 (1998): 107.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Daniel Wolpert, *Creating a Life with God: The Call of Ancient Prayer Practices* (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2003), 309, Kindle.

⁹⁰ Dallas Willard, *Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998), 5159, Kindle.

superficial our thoughts are, how noisy our world is, how inattentive we are to the reality of God's presence."⁹¹

It is in the desert, that place of solitude, where an individual gives time for silence. It is in silence where the search for God takes place, it is where the soul meets its true love. "Stillness is a precondition to deep knowing of God."⁹² In silence trust is built, fear is cast aside, and strength is given. "The desert will force us to hold our appetites in check, to resist the temptations of the devil and to seek the face of God."⁹³

Silence does not mean void of all words or thought. David Benner explains the importance of God's Word in the silence, "Silence quiets our spirit and deepens our awareness of God and ourselves. But in the absence of the Word, silence becomes an empty void—a place of presence to self that is not anchored in presence to God."⁹⁴ Henry Nouwen further states, "In and through silence the Word of God descends from the mind into the heart, where we can ruminate on it, masticate it, digest it, and let it become flesh and blood in us."⁹⁵

Many who have spent time in solitude and silence speak of the struggle with the Evil One. Jesus had experienced that struggle when Satan tempted him in the desert.⁹⁶ Doherty says of her experience in solitude and silence, "Suddenly this whole other side of

⁹¹ Gerald L. Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 3062-3063, Kindle.

⁹² David G. Benner, *Opening to God: Lectio Divina and Life as Prayer* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 49, Kindle.

⁹³ Sittser, 1475-1476.

⁹⁴ Benner, 57.

⁹⁵ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Spiritual Formation: Following the Movements of the Spirit* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), 293-294, Kindle.

⁹⁶ Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, and Luke 4:1-13.

silence became clear to me in the poustinia, and I realized that silence could be evil and could proceed from the Evil One.”⁹⁷ Silence and solitude is such an unnatural experience for most Christians that often their own thoughts get in the way. Thomas Merton explains the difference between true silence and false silence.

True solitude separates one man from the rest in order that he may freely develop the good that is his own, and then fulfill his true destiny by putting himself at the service of everyone else. False solitude separates a man from his brothers in such a way that he can no longer effectively give them anything or receive anything from them in his own spirit. It establishes him in a state of indigence, misery, blindness, torment, and despair.⁹⁸

Being in the presence of God, while in the silence, transforms the one who was with God. Richard Foster refers to Anthony of Egypt. “When he emerged from the solitude of the desert, he was marked with graciousness, love, kindness, endurance, meekness, freedom from anger, and the practice of prayer.”⁹⁹ Doherty claims that silence is required in order to give joyous hospitality that includes not only home and food, but mind, heart, body and soul.¹⁰⁰

Some Christians may need to physically get away from everyday life in order to learn how to experience silence and solitude. One example of an intimate retreat location is a *poustinia*, a single room cabin, for the purpose of solitude, silence, fasting, and prayer. Usually the only objects in the poustinia are a Bible, pen, paper, and a cross. *Poustinia* is Russian for “desert.” Catherine Doherty brought the poustinia to North

⁹⁷ Doherty, 160.

⁹⁸ Thomas Merton, *No Man Is an Island* (New York: A Harvest Book, Harcourt, Inc., 2002), 248, Kindle.

⁹⁹ Richard J. Foster, *Freedom of Simplicity: Finding Harmony in a Complex World* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002), 984-985, Kindle.

¹⁰⁰ Doherty, 4.

America. Doherty describes her experience with setting up a poustinia. It was a sweet process of God placing the desire in her heart, the discovery of a building, and the blessing of her spiritual leaders.¹⁰¹ Doherty explains,

Deserts, silence, solitudes are not necessarily places but states of mind and heart. These deserts can be found in the midst of the city, and in our everyday lives. We need only to look for them and realize our tremendous needs for them. They will be small solitudes, little deserts, tiny pools of silence, but the experience they will bring, if we are disposed to enter them, may be as exultant and as holy as the one God himself entered. For it is God who makes solitude, deserts, and silences holy.¹⁰²

With this in mind, a personal retreat can be done without leaving one's home and going away for long periods of time. A person can create a desert experience in daily life. This is the intention of *The Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius in Daily Life* by Kevin O'Brien, SJ, a very practical book to be used as an Ignatian Exercise in daily life. Although a person can create a personal desert place, a place of solitude in their heart with God, he or she may still be called to go away for periods of time to set aside the business of life. They may be called to leave behind the distractions that take their attention away from God, for the intended purpose of being alone with God.

Through silence and solitude Catherine Doherty has found a deep love of God. She states that it has been in her times of silence where she has gained her heart of love for God, despite the tragedies of her life. She said,

True silence is a key to the immense and flaming heart of God... True silence leads to final prayer of the constant presence of God, to the heights of contemplation, when the soul, finally at peace, lives by the will of him whom she loves totally, utterly, and completely. This silence, then will break forth in a

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 31-44.

¹⁰² Ibid., 5-6.

charity that overflows in the service of the neighbor without counting the cost. It will witness to Christ anywhere, always.¹⁰³

Ephesians 3:17-19 says, in order for Christians to serve others as they ought, in love, they must first know they are deeply loved by God. Christians are to be deeply rooted and grounded in love, to comprehend with all the saints the breadth and length and height and depth, to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, and to be filled with all the fullness of God. There have been criticisms within modern Christianity toward the ascetic movement and of Christians who become hermits, mostly due to a lack of understanding. Roger D. Sorrell states, “Contrary to old stereotypes, idealistic, and fervent ascetic movements were most dependable sources of revitalized interaction with creatures of the natural world and appreciation for the environment.”¹⁰⁴ He goes on to say, almost every major ascetic movement or revival in the Middle Ages led to renewed interest in the natural world.¹⁰⁵

God provides all of what is needed for life through the creation of planet Earth. Bonaventure held that the “rule” of the Father is to give to another.¹⁰⁶ God provides sources of energy, such as sun, trees, plants, oil, coal, gas, and water. God doesn’t merely sustain life; God created it with great beauty, and “it is good.” “God truly cares for us like a mother cares for her children and expresses this care through the goodness of creation.”¹⁰⁷ Not only does God care for humanity, God for all of creation. One way this

¹⁰³ Ibid., 5.

¹⁰⁴ Roger D. Sorrell, *St. Francis of Assisi and Nature: Tradition and Innovation in Western Christian Attitudes Toward the Environment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 15.

¹⁰⁵ Sorrell, 16.

¹⁰⁶ Delio, 43.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 369.

is evident is that in the cold of winter the ongoing life of plants, animals, birds, and fish can be observed. This kind of observation of God's love and care for creation can ignite a deeper love of God. For example, in northern climates some animals and birds turn white during the winter months for protection against predators, such as ptarmigan and snowshoe rabbits. The leaves on evergreen conifers are long, slender, and waxy. The wax helps the tree retain water in the heat of summer, and the small surface area of the slender needle reduces the damage that could be caused by snowfall in winter. When a person takes the time to make these kinds of observations and connect them with God, a deepening relationship with God and care for creation can take place.

When Christians are grounded in a loving relationship with God in Christ, they become more loving. The Franciscan sees that the spiritual life directs the moral life of the Christian. Central to transformation are the virtues of humility, poverty, obedience, and love.¹⁰⁸ Humility comes from the Latin word *humus*, meaning earth. Nothwehr suggests that imitating Christ's humility calls Christians to claim their identity as creatures of the earth, with distinct capabilities. Humanity must use their knowledge and technology to care for one another and for the earth, just as Jesus used his authority to create the earth and then to humble Himself to bend down and wash the feet of his disciples, who were a part of his creation.¹⁰⁹ John says of Jesus and creation, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 139.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 140.

thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:1-5 [ESV]).

True poverty is the recognition of the need for God in every aspect of life.¹¹⁰ Some have sought to be like Christ by literally giving away all of their material goods. However, material poverty must go hand in hand with humility in Christ, otherwise it is simply being without material possessions. Jesus said that he had no place to lay his head and that those who follow him will experience the same.¹¹¹ This does not mean that all Christians must have no place to lay their heads in order to follow Jesus. What poverty does mean is that the place to lay their heads is not more important than following Christ. Nothwehr explains that poverty is rooted in humanity’s existence as creatures. This is why people never feel like they have enough. If people live with what is sufficient to sustain life and give out of their abundance to others, they are living in true poverty. A person must receive so he or she can give. Poverty and generosity go hand in hand.¹¹²

One of the principles of permaculture¹¹³ is to take what is needed for personal use, from the abundance to share with others, and give back to the land for further abundance. If all humans do is take, they will eventually be without. If they continue to accumulate possessions simply for the sake of having possessions, to use for a short time then throw away and take some more, they will eventually take until the point of serious negative global impact.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 141.

¹¹¹ Luke 9:58, Matthew 8:20.

¹¹² Ibid., 142.

¹¹³ Permaculture will be explained in more detail later in this section.

Listening to creation is not often something most people do, nor do they know what it means. Obedience comes from the Latin word, *oboedire*, meaning ‘to pay attention’ or ‘to hear.’ “Obedience thus opens people to life’s meaning, the motives for action, and the basis for all values.”¹¹⁴ As Christians, it is not only important to listen to God’s voice, but to the voice of the rest of creation. As a person observes creation, he or she can consider what is seen, what is thriving, and what is suffering. The things that are seen, heard, or observed will motivate action to those who are obedient to what they “hear.” An example of listening to the voice of creation is noticing that the water tables have dropped as the number of roads has increased. One reason might be that the rain that once soaked into the ground is now running off the roads and being diverted by way of drainage systems as wastewater. Based upon this observation, the observer could redirect the rainwater runoff for household use or use in the landscape.

The last of the four virtues is love, love that extends to all of God’s creation. Christopher J. H. Wright states, “Having first received God’s love, humans then share it among themselves and with all of creation.”¹¹⁵ As Christians embrace these virtues of humility, poverty, obedience, and love, their hearts are not only drawn toward God but toward all of creation. A desire will grow within to stand in the middle, to be the voice for those with no voice to God and humanity. “Despite human-promoted ownership of the Earth, creation belongs to God. As God’s creatures, made in God’s image, caring for

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 142.

¹¹⁵ Christopher J. H. Wright, “The Care of Creation, the Gospel and our Mission,” *Creation Care in Cristian Mission*, ed. Kapyra J. Kaoma (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016), 185.

the Earth is our divinely-sanctioned missionary duty. Despite our economic status, we are to keep, preserve, and protect God's creation."¹¹⁶

The Intrinsic Value of All Creation

The busyness of the typical American lifestyle not only crowds out time alone with God, but it has also choked out a connection with creation that is meant to treat creation in a way that honors the Creator. It's not just those who have little or no relationship with God who fail to recognize the intrinsic value of all creation, Christians also lack the realization of the intrinsic value of all creation. However, the Franciscan Order's recognition of the intrinsic value of all creation is applicable to all Christians.

John Mizzoni explains St Francis of Assisi's understanding that all created things are at least vestiges of the divine.¹¹⁷ He goes on to say that the cosmos is the *ophanic*, "God revealing." The heart of Franciscan ecotheology is that all things created have the image of God in some way.¹¹⁸ He claims that Francis was not a *pantheist*, all "things are God," but a *panentheist*, "all things are imbued with God's being in the sense that all things are in God."¹¹⁹ Thus, each creature within the cosmos has intrinsic value.

Francis of Assisi's ecological view is a vision of creation that does not objectify creation or take it for granted as worthless and irrelevant unless it can meet some need or purpose for humanity. Rather, it has intrinsic qualities of its own, it has worth apart from

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 253.

¹¹⁷ John Mizzoni, "Franciscan Biocentrism and the Franciscan Tradition," *Ethics & The Environment* 13, no. 1 (2008), 122.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 122-123.

meeting the needs of humanity; creation has worth because of its divine endowment, thus merits notice and respect.¹²⁰ Augustine Thompson tells the story of Francis of Assisi, “Once in the Marche, he came upon a peasant bringing two lambs to market. Horrified to hear that they were to be sold and killed for food, and moved by their pitiful cries, he traded his cloak for the lambs.”¹²¹ According to Meconi Francis believed, “Creation is God’s means of expressing divine goodness, indeed God’s very self, in the incarnation in Jesus Christ. All creation comes from God and returns to God. The Father’s goodness is expressed in the Word, who proceeds from the Father as the perfect expression of the image of God.”¹²² John Duns Scotus (1265-1308), a Franciscan theologian, believed that the cosmos in some way resembled Christ. All things depend on God’s love and free love, and there is a unity in love between God and creation.¹²³

Biocentric belief is the belief that all individual living things have intrinsic value. There has been an argument in favor of modifying biocentrism from individual living things to ecological wholes, as in whole ecosystems. This approach recognizes holistic entities.¹²⁴ Franciscan biocentrism holds to the fundamental value of all living things, and thus humans should respect and value all of creation as an aspect of God’s expressed love of himself to the world. God is the Creator and the Creator continues to create. “The fundamental task for a contemporary Franciscan spirituality of creation is to translate our

¹²⁰ Sorrell, 123.

¹²¹ Augustine Thompson, *Francis of Assisi: A New Biography* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 57, ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹²² David Vincent Meconi S.J., ed., *On Earth as It Is in Heaven: Cultivating a Contemporary Theology of Creation* (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2016), 134.

¹²³ Sorrell, 123.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 125.

care for the natural world into concrete initiatives to reduce our individual and social impact on the Earth.”¹²⁵

The question is, is it biblical that all things have intrinsic value? The creation story in Genesis suggests that all things do have intrinsic value. Dawn Nothwehr points out, “God created everything and it was ‘good and beautiful’ capable of revealing something about the creator; was to be shared among the creatures; and was respected because it was ‘of God.’”¹²⁶ She comes to the conclusion that humans, and all of creation, living and nonliving, are to serve God and follow the divine commandments. “The earth is the LORD’S and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers” (Ps 24:1-2 [ESV]). She reminds the reader that humanity is asked to name the animals and that the act of naming is an act of intimacy, of creating an orderly bond and caring relationship between the human and the other creatures.¹²⁷

Nothwehr makes the connection between humanity and creation in regard to salvation and redemption. “The Hebrew Testament, including the creation stories of Genesis 1 and 2 and related texts, clearly shows that creation and redemption are intimately related and that there is a genuine kinship between humans and all other creatures of God. Throughout salvation history, the God whose creative love overflows in

¹²⁵ Ilia Delio, Keith Douglass Warner, and Pamela Wood, *Care for Creation: A Franciscan Spirituality of the Earth* (Cincinnati, OH: Franciscan Media, 2016), 558-560, Kindle.

¹²⁶ Dawn M Nothwehr, *Ecological Footprints: An Essential Franciscan Guide for Faith and Sustainable Living* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), 8.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

creation also redeems, continuing to bring order out of the chaos caused by sin – all the work of a loving God.”¹²⁸

Christopher Wright suggests that there is more to this understanding: “When seeking for a fully biblical understanding of creation, we should not only look back to the beginning of the Bible and the story of creation itself, or look around at the glory of God expressed in the praise of creation and the fullness of the earth. We also need to look forward to God’s ultimate purpose for creation.”¹²⁹ With this in mind we will consider the ecological view of the Franciscans, beginning with Bonaventure (1221-1274), a Franciscan philosopher, theologian, and scholar.

“In Bonaventure’s view, the Word is the inner self-expression of God, and all of creation is the external expression of the inner Word. Christ, the Word is the Art of the Father, and the creation is the expression of the Artist.”¹³⁰ Nothwehr explains, “The Trinity is the starting point for Bonaventure’s examination of creation and the *exitus/reditus* of creatures in relation to God, the Creator.”¹³¹ God, the uncreated one, the one of pure and perfect love, communicates love in an unlimited number of ways, through Christ, the uncreated incarnate one, and the entire cosmos is redeemed, united, and transformed.

The place humans fit in with God and creation from a Franciscan perspective is that humans are the only ones in creation who have the ability to choose God, and in

¹²⁸ Ibid., 18.

¹²⁹ Kaoma, 185.

¹³⁰ Meconi, 134.

¹³¹ Ibid.

choosing God, become like God in perfect love. Humans are both spirit and matter; they have the ability to unite everything with God. They are, in essence, in the middle or center of creation. As the center of creation, humans have the position of mediation for all of creation that can lead the rest of creation to either perfection or destruction.

“Humans advocate for creatures, giving them a voice before God and the world. The other creatures inspire, thrill, and arouse human awareness of the magnificence and generosity of God, moving them to contemplation.”¹³²

According to Wirzba, because each living thing in creation is a gift and an expression of divine love, human beings ought to respect and revere these creatures, for they are not only in relationship with humans but with God as well.¹³³ Such a view of nature also sits well with a stewardship ethic that recognizes the intrinsic, as well as instrumental, value of beings in the created world, because each individual creature is in concrete relationship with God. “Human beings, as stewards, can enhance that relationship between God and the contingent, finite (and thus fragile) entities in creation; or, in damaging or destroying natural entities, despoil God’s divine creation— even though the existence of each individual thing ultimately is dependent on God’s will.”¹³⁴

¹³² Ibid., 135.

¹³³ Norman Wirzba, *From Nature to Creation: A Christian Vision for Understanding and Loving Our World* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2015), 149, Kindle.

¹³⁴ Mizzoni, 124.

Jesus and Ecological Restoration

Richard Bauckham claims, “A truly Christian ‘green theology’ must surely relate its concerns to Jesus, the Gospels and Christology.”¹³⁵ Paul says of Jesus, “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself, is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col. 1:15–17 [NASV]). Paul’s words are applied to the Christian understanding of Jesus as he relates to creation. Jesus is the one who binds all of creation together. When Jesus read Isaiah 61:1—“He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted”—some scholars interpret this to mean all of what is broken in all of creation, not just the human brokenness. Wirzba states, “Whatever we might think about the order or structure of the world must now be understood in terms of Jesus, because it is in him that all things ‘hold together.’”¹³⁶

In Colossians 1:15-20, Paul explains the supremacy of Jesus Christ, as the image of the invisible God. All things were created through him and for him, the One in whom we have redemption; through him all things are held together. It is through Jesus that all things are reconciled to God, whether things on earth or things in heaven. This includes humanity and the ground that was cursed at the Fall. Osborn concludes from this passage that “Christ is not only the origin of the cosmos; he is also its goal. All things were created for Him, i.e., to be subject to and to glorify him. The cosmos is envisaged as

¹³⁵ Richard Bauckham, *Living with Other Creatures: Green Exegesis and Theology* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011), xii, accessed April 11, 2017, ProQuest Ebrary.

¹³⁶ Wirzba, 20.

being in movement towards its eschatological end, namely, Jesus Christ.”¹³⁷ Then Christians must be active in the salvation of the rest of creation. Jesus is the connection between created and the Creator. Jesus is the one who reveals God to creation; he is the one who has brought, and is bringing, restoration of humanity into the image of God. Osborn reasons, “The close connection made in the OT between the divine image and humankind’s dominion over the material creation means that the latter must undergo a similar transformation.”¹³⁸

Jesus gave himself for the reconciliation of all creation. Ronald J. Sider explains, “According to biblical faith, God’s cosmic plan of restoration includes the whole creation, not just individual ‘souls’.”¹³⁹ Paul told the Romans that “the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God” (Romans 8:21 [NASV]). When Jesus became a servant to humanity he delivered humanity from bondage. The same freedom from bondage is for all creation. As followers of Jesus, Christians join him in delivering creation from bondage, human and other-than-human creation.

One of the major pushbacks of some evangelical leaders is the fine line between worshiping and caring for creation. The fear is that the creation will be worshiped rather than the Creator. This is a legitimate concern. Benjamin Cramer and Andrew Morris, both Christians, wrote *Disestablishing Environmentalism* as a means to create an

¹³⁷ L. H. Osborn, “Creation,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology: Exploring the Unity and Diversity of Scripture*, eds. T. Desmond Alexander, Brian S. Rosner, D.A. Carson, and Graeme Goldsworth (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 434.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 433-434.

¹³⁹ Ronald J. Sider, “Biblical Foundations for Creation Care” in *The Care of Creation: Focusing Concern and Action*, ed. R. J. Berry (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2003), 45.

environmental law that would make environmentalism a religion. Their proposed six characteristics of Environmentalism are:

1. Humanity has lost its spiritual connection to Nature, an alienation that needs to be reversed to allow humans to find their rightful place in the world.
2. Humans have a responsibility to Nature that entitles nonhuman entities to a moral status comparable to that of humans.
3. Nature was once undisturbed (Eden) but was ruined by human action (the Fall). Remaining “pure” areas of Nature have a sacred status and altering them is sacrilegious.
4. Correcting humans’ relationship to Nature requires new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting, which must arise out of personal, transforming revelation.
5. Human history on Earth is part of an apocalyptic narrative that links disaster to the sin or hubris of an “overweening desire to control nature” and that contrasts with the “idea of progress with its ascendant narratives of human victory over nature.”
6. Environmental principles cannot be compromised because they come from a higher authority (Gaia, Nature, or elsewhere).¹⁴⁰

Their petition is for environmentalism to be legally considered a religion in order for disestablishing environmentalism for the purpose of producing “more environmental protection in many respects, just as the disestablishment of religion led to more religious behavior.”¹⁴¹ This could cause Christians to step further away from caring for the environment out of fear of idol worship, thus allowing for an excuse not to properly care for creation.

Fear of creation worship can be avoided, as John Stott states, “If we remember its creation by God and its delegation to us, we will avoid two opposite extremes and instead develop a third and better relationship to nature.”¹⁴² He explains one extreme as the

¹⁴⁰ Benjamin D. Cramer and Andrew P. Morris, “Disestablishing Environmentalism,” *Environmental Law* 39, no. 309 (2009): 7.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 310.

¹⁴² John R. W. Stott, *The Radical Disciple: Some Neglected Aspects of Our Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 52.

deification of nature and worshipping it. He included the Gaia movement, which attributes to nature its own self-contained, self-regulating, and self-perpetuating mechanisms, essentially eliminating the need for God. “We respect nature because God made it; we do not reverence nature as if it were God and inviolable.”¹⁴³ Nature can be revered, not as divine, but because it was created by the Divine. The second extreme Stott says Christians must avoid is the exploitation of nature. Christians are not to treat creation as if they are god, that they have the right to destroy what God has created. “The domination God has given us is responsible stewardship, not a destructive domination.”¹⁴⁴ The third option is to be in cooperation with God. Humans are a part of creation and are dependent on the Creator, yet God has given a part of creation, humanity, to care for the rest of creation.¹⁴⁵

In 1994 the Evangelicals developed a declaration called, *Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation*.¹⁴⁶ Its main emphasis is that the earth belongs to God and people are responsible to God for its care. People are stewards of the earth and responsible to God for their treatment of the environment. However, stewardship implies there is still a disconnect between humans and the rest of creation. Warners states, “To better represent our creation care responsibilities, we propose a new paradigm based on a model of

¹⁴³ John R. W. Stott, forward to *The Care of Creation: Focusing Concern and Action*, ed. R. J. Berry (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2003), 8.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ David Warners, Michael Ryskamp, and Randall Van Dragt, “Reconciliation Ecology: A New Paradigm for Advancing Creation Care,” *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 66, no. 4 (December 2014): 221-235, accessed April 16, 2017, <http://go.galegroup.com/georgefox.idm.oclc.org/ps/i.do?&id=GALE%7CA461530151&v=2.1&u=newb64238&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&authCount=1>.

servanthood and informed by the concept of reconciliation ecology, which focuses on mending broken relationships between human beings and nonhuman creation.”¹⁴⁷

Servanthood is understood as the way in which Jesus served all of creation when he joined his creation in order to care for and reconcile creation to himself.

Instead of working to take care of creation that resides ‘out there’ some place, reconciliation ecology emphasizes that we are part of creation – our bodies, our buildings, our cars, our yards, etcetera – and it challenges people everywhere to live in their own places in ecologically affirming ways that enhance biodiversity and restore ecological functionality to their own local places.¹⁴⁸

This allows the average person to realize that he or she has a part in the restoration of all creation, not just human restoration. “Reconciliation ecology is a hopeful paradigm – it raises the possibility that the human presence has the capacity to be more a blessing than a strain on the land.”¹⁴⁹

Seven times in Genesis 1 God declared what was created as good. L. H. Osborn said, “This does not mean that creation is good in itself; rather, it is a divine judgment about creation. The creature is good by virtue of its standing in appropriate relationship to its creator.”¹⁵⁰ The goodness of the created world was not for humanity, but for the sake of God as stated by Bonhoeffer, “The world is preserved not for its own sake but for the sake of the sight of God.”¹⁵¹ It’s important to not only recognize the divine in nature as it was meant to be, but also that this divine has order, or patterns. Bill Mollison explains,

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 221.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 224.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Osborn, 430.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

“Patterns are all about us: waves, sand dunes, volcanic landscapes, trees, blocks of buildings, even animal behavior.”¹⁵² The seasons are an example of one observable pattern, winter’s cold and short days, summer’s dry hot, long days, spring and the rains, autumn and harvest. As these patterns are observed, the observer gains a better understanding of the world in which all of creation lives.

The case for creation care is not enough. It’s not enough to read Scriptures about God’s care of creation, or to read commentary of theologians in regard to the need of human responsibility for creation care. More than an awareness of the intrinsic value of creation must be realized in order for Christians to be restorative agents of creation. Creation care must be put into practice in order to actually restore the destruction that is taking place mentioned in Section One. Creation care is good, even vital; however, just because an individual values creation does not mean he or she is in an intimate relationship with God. Many in other religions have creation care as a part of their religious practices; Hinduism and Buddhism, are two religions that value the natural world. Many earth activists who teach permaculture and restorative methods of ecological systems are not Christians. Starhawk is one such trainer who embraces goddess and pagan teachings rather than Christian teachings.¹⁵³ Many earth care activists are materialists who do not see the transcendent in nature, nor believe in any reality beyond this world. Permaculture activist Toby Hemenway said of soil, “Yet soil is

¹⁵² Bill Mollison, *Permaculture: A Designer’s Manual* (Tasmania, Australia: Tagari Publications, 1988), 70.

¹⁵³ Starhawk’s website and teaching, <http://starhawk.org>.

miraculous. It is where the dead are brought back to life.”¹⁵⁴ Though it is a thought provoking statement, his concept of life ends and begins in the dirt.

Humanity's Connection with Creation

Genesis 2:7 states that God created Adam from the earth, “Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground.” God created humanity out of the earth, thus a vital connection exists between humanity and the earth. From the earth God also created the source on which humanity would feed, vegetation and animals. God created an interdependence between humanity and creation. Not only does the creation depend on humanity and the condition of humanity, but humanity depends on the earth and the condition of the earth.

After God spoke creation into existence, the Creator gave a word of blessing that included nonhuman creation, “God blessed them and said, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.’” (Genesis 1:22).¹⁵⁵ As Kaiser points out, “Accordingly, all creatures of sea and air were endowed with reproductive capabilities and given a divine mission.”¹⁵⁶ Part of the blessing from God over humanity was shared with the created order mentioned in verse twenty-two. Nearly the same words are used in verse twenty-eight for a second blessing.

Osborn stated, “If God can bring the cosmic order into being God can certainly restore order to Judah. The correspondence between cosmic order and social order is also

¹⁵⁴ Toby Hemenway, *Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture*, 2nd ed. (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 2009), 71.

¹⁵⁵ Kaiser, 41.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

implicit in the OT concept of shalom.”¹⁵⁷ He goes on to explain that this is very different from a largely anthropocentric Christian tradition, where humans are the center of creation and everything was created for humanity. God’s creation was created and declared as good even before humans were created, so creation has its own place in the goodness of God’s creation, and is not merely for human benefit.¹⁵⁸

Though humanity was created in the image of God and given dominion over creation, that doesn’t mean there isn’t an intimate relationship between the two; it also doesn’t mean that all of creation is hinged on humanity. Humankind and animals were created on the same day; God didn’t set a whole day aside just for the creation of humanity. Another reason not to think of humanity as the climax of creation is because that position does not belong to humanity, but to the establishment of God’s Sabbath communion with creation as a whole.¹⁵⁹ It was God’s Sabbath that was the climax, not the creation of humanity.

A major theme in the Old Testament is God’s plan to redeem humanity and the rest of creation; it is the foreshadowing of Jesus Christ. He is the One the prophets spoke of, and who is revealed in the New Testament. In Genesis God gives humans dominion over the created world. According to Osborn, the command to have dominion is closely related to the divine blessing of being fruitful and multiplying, to fill the earth and subdue it, to rule over the fish and the birds, and every living creature. The blessing gave responsibility to humankind for the rest of creation. In Genesis 2 God placed Adam in the

¹⁵⁷ Osborn, 431.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

garden in order to take care of it. Therefore, the vocation of caring for the land is a divine vocation, transformative in as much as humans are able to transform.¹⁶⁰ Thus, dominion doesn't allow for the abuse of the land and the animals. It can be concluded, that humanity, especially those in Christ who are a new creation, are expected to shepherd the creation, to be good stewards. Stewardship, Brunner, Butler, and Swoboda assert, "When practiced with humility and solidarity, is a perspective that recognizes our God-given responsibilities as humans. It acknowledges that even as we are the principal cause of the eco-crisis, we have a primary obligation for its restoration."¹⁶¹

Typically, humanity has not been good to the land ever since the Fall. Humanity has failed to be the stewards of the land, the land God called humans to care for when all of creation was spoken into existence. N.T. Wright compares poor stewardship of the land with exile, "Humans continued to abuse their environment, so that one of the reasons why God sent Israel into exile, according to the Scriptures, was so that the land could at last enjoy its Sabbaths."¹⁶² This may not be fully true, due to the ravaging of the land by their captors after they were sent into exile. However, it does point to the need of providing rest to the land, and with rest comes rejuvenation. God considered earth's wellbeing important enough to include it in the first covenant.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Brunner, 774.

¹⁶² Ibid., 596.

¹⁶³ And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth" (Genesis 9:12-14, and 17 [ESV]).

Regeneration is critical for the survival of all creation, including humanity. God's people were commanded to care for creation. For example, the Law required animals to rest every seventh day along with humans, and the earth to rest every seventh year. Randy S. Woodley states that God ensured the care of creation in the Law. "Apparently, generosity and how to be a caretaker for creation in a reciprocating relationship was something that humans had to be required to practice on a regular basis in order to incorporate it into their lives."¹⁶⁴ He goes on to say, "While creation may elicit inspirational feelings in people, to the Euro-western mind, animals, birds, water, and earth are rarely seen as the start of a continuous conversation with the Creator."¹⁶⁵ The mindset of creation as utilitarian, as opposed to co-restorers, is a difficult mindset to change. One way to change the mindset of creation as utilitarian is to realize one's connectedness to all of creation. In Gen 1:29-30, God gives human all kinds of vegetation for their food, and does the same for the animals. This is a reminder that the food source of plants is shared with animals.

"Brueggemann's view of the intimacy and the connectedness of all creation found within shalom is consistent with many indigenous concepts of well-being. Indigenous people understand all parts of creation as related to one another."¹⁶⁶ It is hard for most Westerners to understand this connectedness. Westerners are often so far removed from nature that they have little understanding where the things come from. Many people may understand the food in the store comes from a farm, but do not know where the resources

¹⁶⁴ Randy S. Woodley, *Shalom and the Community of Creation: An Indigenous Vision* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 518, Kindle.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 826-828.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 391-392.

to make the computer they are typing on came from and the impact it has had on the earth. Wirzba goes so far as to say, “To forget one’s grounding in the soil is to become spiritually adrift and confused. It is to forget that one’s value is affirmed fundamentally in the divine gift of land and bodies that are daily nurtured by God, and is not dependent on the valuations of imperialist cultures that seek to control bodies to their own ends.”¹⁶⁷

The current form of Western identity with knowledge is compartmentalized as it relates to art, religion, and science. Raymond Pierotti states this is not the case with Indigenous knowledge, “The Indigenous knowledge base on the other hand integrates those areas of knowledge so that science is both religious and aesthetic.”¹⁶⁸ Kathleen Sands said, “Prior to contact with Europeans, Native peoples had no word in their languages to describe religion. It was not that they lacked religion, but quite the contrary, that they did not classify religion as a separate realm.”¹⁶⁹ The same view of knowledge was true of the early church; only relatively recently in human history have science and religion and art been separated.

God spoke these words at the dedication of the temple. “When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chr 7:13-14 [ESV]). God

¹⁶⁷ Wirzba, 101.

¹⁶⁸ Raymond Pierotti, *Indigenous Knowledge, Ecology, and Evolutionary Biology* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2010), 15, accessed April 16, 2017, ProQuest Ebrary.

¹⁶⁹ Kathleen Sands, “Territory, Wilderness, Property, and Reservation: Land and Religion Native American Supreme Court Cases,” *American Indian Law Review* 36, no. 253 (2011): 259.

made a connection between the temple of God, God's dwelling place, the people of God, and creation. If Christians take a biblical stance in regard to creation, it would cause them to ask for forgiveness for the damage humans have done, repent, and take on responsibility to repair what humans have damaged, and do what they can to ensure no new harm occurs.¹⁷⁰

In Indigenous philosophy, all things are connected. "Despite the impact of colonization, there still remains two basic premises of Indigenous philosophy, tantamount to religious principles in Indigenous tradition: (1) All things are connected, and (2) All things are related."¹⁷¹ Pierotti states that, "In the cultural traditions of the Indigenous peoples of North and South America the distinction between social and ecological communities is not clearly delineated. In these traditions, humans regularly have had social interactions and maintained social relationships with plants, animals, and features of the landscape, including rocks, rivers, and mountains."¹⁷² Berry states that being disconnected from the rest of creation gives permission to exploit creation. Non-Indigenous people can learn from the Indigenous people of North and South America about being connected or interconnected to creation. "Indigenous Americans extend the concept of community to whom responsibility is owed to include the nonhuman. Honor and responsibility permeate all aspects of Indigenous life, including interactions with the

¹⁷⁰ Theodore Hiebert, "Reclaiming the World: Biblical Resources for the Ecological Crisis," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 65, no. 4 (October 2011): 348-349, accessed January 16, 2017, <http://journals.sagepub.com.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/doi/abs/10.1177/002096431106500402>.

¹⁷¹ Pierotti, 18.

¹⁷² R. J. Berry, *The Care of Creation: Focusing Concern and Action* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 26.

natural and nonhuman world.”¹⁷³ Ronald Sider explains the effects of a Christian disconnected from creation, “To a Christian a tree can be no more than a physical fact. The whole concept of the sacred grove is alien to Christianity and to the ethos of the West. For nearly two millennia Christian missionaries have been chopping down sacred groves, which are idolatrous because they assume a spirit nature.”¹⁷⁴

The very design of creation points to interconnectedness. As designers and co-restorers, people are to be open to see the potential of multiple purposes or interconnections of plants, animals, insects, sun, water, wind, and earth. If a Christian becomes aware of these things he or she can do better at living out the purpose of earth care that God gave to humanity in Genesis 2.

In order for restoration of the earth’s soil to take place, humanity must not only become aware of the destruction of creation, but must take action toward restoration of creation. Giuliano Vigini says that Pope Francis “has repeatedly stressed that no reform can bear fruit if it is not accompanied by inner renewal of the individuals concerned and their total commitment to serve.”¹⁷⁵ He goes on to say of Pope Francis’ address in *Laudato Si’*: “His powerful message was to restore the Earth as a beautiful home for a loving family that can offer a future of justice and peace for all.”¹⁷⁶ Pope Francis is a Jesuit with a Franciscan heart; he is the first pope to take on the name of Francis, in honor of Francis of Assisi.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 17-18.

¹⁷⁴ Lynn White, Jr. “The Historical Root of Our Ecological Crisis,” in *The Care of Creation: Focusing Concern and Action*, ed. R. J. Berry (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2003), 40.

¹⁷⁵ Giuliano Vigini introduction to *Care for Creation: A Call for Ecological Conversion*, by Pope Francis (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016), 120, Kindle.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 127.

Is it possible to restore the land as individuals, as homeowners, or people who live in cities? John Cuddeback writes, in speaking of household managers or landowners, “It is they, not the forces of the market, who can and must understand land and labor for what it is and thus dispose of it accordingly.”¹⁷⁷ Humanity does affect the land, as individuals and as a whole. “Land is surely for human use, and the prudent stewardship of it is ordered to the human good. But it is for human use precisely in and through not despite, its wonderfully complex inner teleology.”¹⁷⁸ Human restorative interaction with creation starts with understanding the connection between humanity and creation as jointly created. It also recognizes that the existence of nonhuman creation is not merely for humanity. Meconi goes on to say that the earth is not for humanity as a tool or instrument. It is God’s artifact, and as such the natural world is God’s instrument.¹⁷⁹ Christians should consider how the use of the natural world will serve God and the Creator’s ends. Creation does serve God by doing as it was created to do, and part of that purpose is to serve the physical needs of humanity. By doing this it is giving glory to its Creator. “We are losing our attitude of wonder, of contemplation, of listening to creation and thus we no longer manage to interpret in it what Benedict XVI calls ‘the rhythm of the love story between God and man.’”¹⁸⁰ Pope Francis makes the connection between caring and cultivating. Care and cultivate go hand in hand. “Those who do not cultivate

¹⁷⁷ John Cuddeback, “Restoring Land Stewardship through Household Prudence,” in *On Earth as It Is in Heaven: Cultivating a Contemporary Theology of Creation* ed. David Vincent Meconi S.J. (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2016), 152.

¹⁷⁸ Meconi, 153.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Pope Francis, *Care for Creation: A Call for Ecological Conversion*, ed. Giuliano Vignini (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016), 196, Kindle.

do not care; those who do not care do not cultivate.”¹⁸¹ Most people care more about what they are involved in than what they are not involved in. In order to properly steward creation, one must care about creation and the Creator, each points to the other.

“We who live in affluent countries have the power to make alternative choices, to curb our consumption and live lives of greater simplicity, motivated by our care for the Earth.”¹⁸² Every human has responsibility to steward the land, rich and poor, Christian or not. People can start by the way they consume the natural resources, such as water. The average North American consumes 100 gallons of water each day, most of which gets flushed down the toilet and back into the water system for treatment.¹⁸³ Water and water usage is a huge topic; however, there are a few things everyone can implement in order to be more responsible for personal use of water. For example, creatively using grey water to watering plants or for the flushing of the toilet. Another effective water management system is to implement rainwater catchment to catch rainwater for yard or household use. One could divert rainwater runoff from the streets to water bushes or trees that are close to the street. In Keyline planting, as water runs downhill each level is watered.¹⁸⁴

Mollison argues that people have the power to restore and heal the earth’s soil by caring for it with an intentional plan using the principles of permaculture.¹⁸⁵ However, if

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 211.

¹⁸² Ibid., 547.

¹⁸³ United States Environmental Protection Agency, accessed December 2, 2016, <https://www3.epa.gov/watersense/pubs/indoor.html>.

¹⁸⁴ For an example of keyline soil formation and landscape design see the document entitled “Intro to Keyline Soil Formation and Landscape Design,” January 2013, accessed December 4, 2017, <http://straffordccd.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Keyline-Soils-Yeomans-Plow.pdf>.

¹⁸⁵ Bill Mollison, *Permaculture Two Practical Design for Town and Country in Permanent Agriculture* (Tasmania, Australia: Tagari Publications, 1979), 7.

people continue to consume without giving back they will destroy what God created as good. Permaculture invites people to enter into a relationship with the earth and its ecosystems rather than destroying them. People can do this by observing their natural environment and building systems that will nurture and sustain life, even regenerate it. Some believe humanity has gone beyond simple sustainability, that they have destroyed the planet and used up the resources to the point of needing to restore and generate new resources.

Pope Francis said, “We must protect creation, for it is a gift which the Lord has given us, it is God’s present to us. We are the guardians of creation. When we exploit creation, we destroy that sign of God’s love.”¹⁸⁶ In order for humanity to stop destroying God’s expression of love, and receive it as the gift that it is, humans will have to think differently. Humanity will have to be open to new ways of living, to see problems as solutions. To quote a modern Franciscan, Richard Rohr, “We do not think ourselves into a new way of living, but we live ourselves into a new way of thinking.”¹⁸⁷

Permaculture

A renewed interest in the natural world is starting to emerge today. One movement gaining in popularity is permaculture. Permaculture is an alternative form of food production to monoculture, the current form of most modern American agriculture. It mimics nature by using diversity of plants and animals interdependent on each other. Bill Mollison and David Holmgren founded permaculture in the mid-1970s. The term

¹⁸⁶ Pope Francis, 271.

¹⁸⁷ Richard Rohr, *The Eight Core Principles* (Cincinnati, OH: Franciscan Media, 2013), 103, Kindle.

was used to describe an integrated, evolving system of perennial or self-perpetuating plants and animals that are useful for people. It has changed a bit in its definition since then, to consciously designed landscapes which mimic nature in patterns and relationship, while yielding an abundance of food and energy for the needs of people and the landscape itself. This includes people and their buildings.¹⁸⁸

Permaculture is based upon three basic ethical principles: earth care, people care, and returning the surplus to that end, of earth care and people care.¹⁸⁹ Permaculture uses these principles of ethics as learned from indigenous tribal cultures. David Holmgren points out that the indigenous cultures have existed in relative balance with their environment and survived for longer than more recent civilizations.¹⁹⁰ Earth care is primarily the literal care of the soil, to care for the earth in such a way that soil is increased in both quantity and quality for future health and wellbeing of society.

Permaculture is a method with observable principles; Mollison describes them as follows: First, work with nature, rather than against the natural elements, forces, pressures, processes, agencies, and evolutions, so humans assist rather than impede natural development.¹⁹¹ Though it sounds good, it is very time consuming in the initial implementation due to the period of observation. For example, observation of natural elements would include, direction of prevailing winds, angles of the sun over an entire year, normality for seasonal rain and snow fall, when and how much, etc. The difficulty

¹⁸⁸ David Holmgren, *Permaculture: Principles & Pathways Beyond Sustainability* (Hepburn, Victoria, Australia: Holmgren Design Services, 2002), xix.

¹⁸⁹ Bill Mollison, *Introduction to Permaculture*, 2nd ed. (Tasmania, Australia: Tagari Publications, 2011), 2.

¹⁹⁰ David Holmgren, 1.

¹⁹¹ Mollison, *Permaculture: A Designer's Manual*, 35.

with this form of design is that it initially takes a lot of time and expense. It may take up to a year before one builds an infrastructure, in order to properly make all the observations necessary. However, if the appropriate time is taken to observe and install an infrastructure in response to one's observations, this will be a self-sustaining system that will require little to no human input for food production.

In Mollison's view, monoculture, single crop production, is not suitable, because it actually works against nature and other natural elements. He points out that by using chemical fertilizers and pesticides to care for the crops, the soil deteriorates and is ultimately destroyed.¹⁹² Though permaculture is not designed for industrial scale production, its methods can be implemented to produce a cash crop without the destruction of the earth's soil. What permaculture contributes with a variety of trees, plants, bushes, and animals is diversity. With diversity comes health. If a pest that is harmful for corn wipes out all of the corn, there are still other crops available. This destroyed crop of corn is still useful as feed for the animals, such as pigs and chickens, or as compost; therefore, it does not go to waste. The advantage of the conventional monoculture system is that a single farmer is able to mass-produce food in order to feed large numbers of people. It is easier to harvest a single crop more quickly. Modern farming relies, almost entirely, on synthetic fertilizers; whereas, regenerative agriculture minimizes this use due to recycled agricultural elements as much as possible.¹⁹³

¹⁹² Ibid., 3-6.

¹⁹³ Christopher J. Rhodes, "Feeding and healing the world: through regenerative agriculture and permaculture," *Science Progress*, vol. 95, no. 4 (Winter 2012), 378, accessed April 23, 2016, <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA320589588&v=2.1&u=newb64238&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&asid=76e1f132e0b322cad5f248f1a9493527>, Academic OneFile.

This leads to a second principle, the problem is the solution; everything can work both ways.¹⁹⁴ In other words, the problem can be a positive resource in another venue. It's up to the individual to figure out how the problem can be used in a positive manner. The scenario mentioned above in regard to the failed corn crop is an example of this. It is a mindset, a way of looking at things in order to get to the heart of a problem, seeing that problem as a solution for something else. "An open, inquiring attitude to problems is almost always more fruitful than an urgent demand for solutions. The latter is often driven by fear and an unquestioned consensus about the nature of the problem."¹⁹⁵

Third, make the least change for the greatest possible affect. This might include creating a small dam in order to divert run off rainwater back onto the property to be used by the plants. Brad Lancaster suggests a simple cut in the curb in order to redirect rainwater from the street to water plants and trees.¹⁹⁶

A fourth principle states that the yield of a system is theoretically unlimited. The only limit on the number of uses of resource possibilities within a system is in the limit of the information and imagination of the designer. This principle encourages creativity and solution-based thinking. However, it can lead to human-centric thinking. The founders of permaculture, and many who subscribe to the principles of permaculture, see religion as mythical. To remove God means any form of stewardship is for the sake of survival of the species rather than to honor God. In honoring God's command to care for creation,

¹⁹⁴ Holmgren, 18.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Brad Lancaster, *Rainwater Harvesting for Drylands and Beyond*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Tucson, AZ: Rainsource Press, 2013), 8.

the result is the survival of the species. Permaculture methods are one way of honoring God by restoration of creation.

Permaculture Methodology of Design

Bill Mollison defines permaculture design as “a system of assembling conceptual, material, and strategic components in a pattern which functions to benefit life in all its forms. It seeks to provide a sustainable and secure place for living things on this earth.”¹⁹⁷ Part of the methodology of permaculture design is the use of maps and map overlays to analyze the elements’ needs and the product and function of each of these elements. Elements are natural resources such as sun, water, wind, terrain, animals, plants, and buildings. To help simplify human effort, permaculture design uses a zone and sector system. Zones are based off of rings around the house that include other buildings, plants, and animals. In permaculture there are five zones. Zone zero is the house; each of the other five zones go out from that point. Zone one includes those things that the person will access multiple times a day, such as herb garden or chicken nesting box. Zone two is accessed less often, maybe weekly, for more personal use. This would include things like onions, potatoes, grapes, beans, or fruit bearing bushes. Zone three is the farm area, commercial crops, and animals. This is where your moneymaking crops would be, and is where the surplus exists for giving back to the earth, selling, or trading. Zone four is hardly accessed, and is used for storage such as a pond for storing water, or

¹⁹⁷ Mollison, *Permaculture: A Designer’s Manual*, 36.

trees for timber. Zone five is the unmanaged area, the area beyond what is intentionally being cultivated.¹⁹⁸

Another area to consider is that of sectors. Sectors are lines through the property dividing exterior energy such as sun, rain, fire, shade, and wind. The designer must observe nature's design, then create a strategy around those observations. These sources of energy can be either beneficial or destructive depending upon how the design is set up. For example, trees can be planted in a way that shade the house in summer and warm the house in winter. They can also be planted as windbreaks. There are some trees that are more fire resistant than others. Consideration of water consumption is also important. For example: will the tree need more water than it would receive due to rainfall alone? All of these things should be considered in constructing the best possible design. Terrain could also be considered a source of energy. For example, as water flows downhill power can be derived from the flow of water; thus water storage and water delivery are impacted by the slope of terrain.

Part of the methodology of permaculture design is the use of what seems to be a random assembly of lists; such as stacking time so things are harvested at different times. Another example is stacking of elements is planting, large trees, small trees, bushes, small plants, ground cover, root plants (i.e. carrots), and vines, together. The purpose of stacking elements is to use less land space for a greater yield of produce.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 49-53.

¹⁹⁹ Bill Mollison, *Permaculture Design Course*, DVD-ROM (Tasmania, Australia: Tagari Publications, 2010), Lesson 3, Methods of Design.

Permaculture is like a web of resources, all interdependent on each other, in which nothing happens in isolation.²⁰⁰ Everything must have at least two purposes, such as bees. Bees produce honey for human consumption; they also pollinate the fruit trees and berry bushes. The fruit is consumed by the humans, animals, and produces seeds for future generations of trees. The trees are used as shade in summer and allow the warmth of the sun in winter, thus conserving other resources such as water.²⁰¹

This type of planning and design is all encompassing. It takes a wide variety of information and knowledge on a vast number of things. To do this well, one would have to know about the indigenous plants, their growing season, harvest times, and how they interconnect with other plants and animals. One will have to know about soil regeneration, water recovery and use, and how to best capture the energy from the sun and wind. One would have to know about birds, animals, and fish. This is part of the reason permaculture has not been adopted on a larger scale. For the average person this is more than they have time to research and set up. The establishment of these kinds of systems takes a long time and may require a lot of labor for the initial infrastructure. However, because this system is so interconnected and any small input or change can make an impact, to effectively engage in permaculture most people must start small. People who live in the city can live a permaculture lifestyle. The urban dweller could start with a small herb garden, use a tower planter to grow their own vegetables, buy produce from their local farmer's market, set up a grey water system that reuses grey water, or use the sun to heat their water, to name a few. If a person wants to learn more

²⁰⁰ Starhawk, *The Earth Path: Grounding Your Spirit in the Rhythms of Nature* (New York, New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2004), 18.

²⁰¹ Mollison, *Permaculture: A Designer's Manual*, 47.

about how to do permaculture there are permaculture design courses, there are some on line and some on location. ²⁰² The ecological design and permaculture design courses fall short in that they don't make a connection with the retreatant/student's relationship with God.

Retreat Center

One way to introduce Christians to the connection between regenerative care of creation and relationship with God is through a retreat center with an eco-spiritual focus. When ecology and spirituality are blended, some Christians approach with caution while others reject it altogether. The concern is the fine line a Christian walks between the action of restorative care of creation, and worship of creation. However, the Scripture speaks of restoration for all of creation, human and nonhuman. What role, if any, are Christians to have in setting creation free from its bondage to decay? Paul Trebilco said, "Christians must now live in a way that is consistent with the kingdom, and so are called to embrace kingdom values and goals, including harmony with creation, and so are to act to preserve and enhance the created order."²⁰³ What if there was a place where both restoration of soul and soil could take place; a place where the solitude of the Desert Mother and Fathers meet with the ecological restoration of permaculture?

²⁰² Permaculture Design Course examples: Permaculture Research Institute, at Zaytuna Farm in Australia, taught by Geoff Lawton, Bill Mollison's understudy, <https://zaytunafarm.com/courses-events/>. Starhawk has a place in California where she teaches, <http://starhawk.org/schedule/>. Ben Falk of *Whole System Designs* has a Permaculture Design Course in Maine, <http://www.wholesystemdesign.com/permaculture-design-course/>. *Rancho Delicioso* in Costa Rica where one can learn permaculture and yoga, <http://ranchodelicioso.com/permaculture-yoga-program-pyp/>. These are just a few examples of places where permaculture is taught.

²⁰³ Paul Trebilco, "Animals," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996), 25.

The unique retreat center that I am proposing will be called Poustinia Garden Retreat Center, a personal place to get away for silence and prayer on your own, with the option of spiritual direction and meals. It will have an ecological focus that will include permaculture design methods. The retreat center will be set up in the seven zones observed in permaculture. There will be a food forest that will feature fruit and nut trees. The understory of the trees will include smaller fruit bearing trees, berry bushes, vines, herbs, root crops, and groundcover.

The retreat center will include water management systems for better use and flow of the water on the grounds, such as keyline swales and a pond. A rainwater catchment system and use of grey water will be another aspect of water management at the retreat center. The retreat center will include alternative methods for heat and power, that will include, but not be limited to, solar power, hydropower, rocket mass heater, and solar hot water heater. This will give retreatants an experience where they can take what they learn and implement it in their own space. The retreatant will experience a place where restorative practices of earth care are in place with the use permaculture, or in the process of being put in place. A retreatant may have opportunity to help put some of these systems in place at the retreat center.

Upon arrival to Poustinia Garden, the retreatant will receive a welcoming orientation. In the orientation, the retreatant will receive a tour of the facilities. The tour will include how creation care is being done at the retreat center. They will learn how water management and usage is done, as well as alternative ways to generate power and heat. They will be given a tour of the gardens with an invitation to use them and care for them. They will also be introduced to the outdoor kitchen. They will be shown how to use

the outdoor kitchen's sun oven, cob oven, and grill during their stay. Food for the meals will be provided by the retreat center, and will be grown or raised right on the property grounds or purchased from local farmers. The retreatant will prepare some meals, and others will be prepared by the retreat center. They will also have opportunity to participate in physically caring for the grounds in a manner that is restorative rather than destructive.

Retreatants will have an opportunity to grow in their love of God and for God's creation and take those practices home to implement there as well. There are four primary practices the retreatant will experience while at Poustinia Garden. The first is solitude. This will be an opportunity to leave one's ordinary life for a time in order to have intentional time with God without the distractions of everyday responsibilities. Second, is the practice of silence. In the guided retreat, there is significant time set aside each day for silence. Silence is setting aside the noise of everyday life, even the noise in one's head, in order to take that time to be in prayer.

Prayer is another primary focus. The retreatant will be encouraged to take the time set aside for silence to pray using the following methods on the website: Lectio Divina, Ignatian prayer, personalizing the Scripture, The Examine, intercessory prayer, praise and thanksgiving, and prayer walks. The website explains these types of prayer and gives the retreatant examples of how to apply them. If the retreatant has not spent time reviewing these methods before arriving for their retreat, the retreat center spiritual director will help guide the retreatant in their time of prayer. Finally, creation care is a spiritual practice that the retreatant will participate in while at Poustinia Garden. Creation care is a

spiritual practice when done out of love for God and the things God loves, such as creation.

Conclusion

Taking time in solitude at a retreat center is one way a person can become transformed spiritually and learn through experience. What the retreatant experiences and learns while at the retreat center about spiritual disciplines and creation care is to continue once he or she returns home. By doing this they can become a restorative agent for humanity and the rest of creation. This experience can take place at a small retreat center with an ecological influence using permaculture principles for earth care. What is learned at Poustinia Garden can be replicated at their own home. Between what is experienced at the retreat center and the information found on the website, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com>, the retreatant will have the tools to create a similar space in their own home.

SECTION FOUR: ARTIFACT INTRODUCTION

This dissertation proposes that many Christians lack intimacy in their relationship with God and do not connect their relationship with God to their relationship with creation. The high-paced lifestyle that most people lead is a large contributing factor to this lack of relationship with God and creation. Silence, solitude, and prayer are often neglected disciplines.

Discovering that most Christians do not connect their relationship with God to their relationship with creation led me to ask and seek an answer to the question, “What if there was a place where a person could go to experience renewing of their relationship with God and restore their relationship with creation?” This dissertation proposes that a retreat center, set up for individual retreats that implements permaculture practices, will give people an experience that will facilitate listening to God and learn how to be a restorative agent for creation. The retreat center will teach retreatants practices they can implement at home in their relationship with God and their relationship with creation.

Chosen Communication Medium: Business Plan and Website

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to actually create the retreat center. The retreat center is the true artifact and is in process of being created. The artifact presented include a short business plan overview and a website for the retreat center. Appendix A is the business plan. The business plan will provide a short executive summary, a business model, opportunities for the retreatant, execution of the retreat center, and the intention of the business start. Appendix B is a website. The website is a digital, visual, interactive

expression of the true artifact, the retreat center. This website will provide tools for different types of prayer and how retreatants can implement aspects of permaculture.

The medium chosen to direct people to the retreat center is a website, Poustinia Garden Retreat Center.²⁰⁴ A website is a helpful tool that can be used by anyone who has internet access no matter where they are in the world. Through the website individuals can discover the retreat center when they do a web search on key words, such as “retreat,” “spiritual formation,” or “permaculture.” It will serve as a place a retreatant can go to in order to prepare for their retreat ahead of time. For example, the retreatant can go to the website for methods of prayer to learn how to implement these types of prayer and try them out while on retreat. Once the retreatant returns home, he or she will have access to spiritual formation and permaculture resources for continued spiritual formation. A website will aid in a worry-free experience while at the Poustinia Garden Retreat Center, by providing resources after the retreat for the things that were learned during their stay. The learning experience, while at the retreat center, will include, but not be limited to, spiritual direction, food preparation, care for the retreat center grounds, and use of or installation of permaculture design systems. The website can also be used for those who would like to create their own space whether they visit Poustinia Garden Retreat Center or not.

A website will give the author opportunity to make updates as change takes place at Poustinia Garden. The website will include a blog to share things such as new systems that have been put in place at the retreat center. Examples of these system additions are swales and other water management techniques, a food forest, a new cabin, or an addition

²⁰⁴ Poustinia Garden Retreat Center, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com>.

to the outdoor kitchen. Pictures of the facilities can also be put on the website so potential retreatants know what is and is not available.

SECTION FIVE: ARTIFACT SPECIFICATIONS DESCRIBED

Introduction

The goal of the business plan is to give a brief overview of what the retreat center will look like and how it will operate. It is not a detailed business plan that would include the financial documentation of the business. There are several goals of this website. First, it introduces people to Poustinia Garden Retreat Center who are searching for a personal retreat. Second, it is a resource for spiritual formation and information on how to implement permaculture design methods. This will give retreatants a resource to use after they return home from the retreat center to continue what was learned while there. Another goal is to have information available for anyone who would like to create their own space for spiritual practices and/or creation care. A unique benefit of this website is that it is a single location for Christian spiritual formation and permaculture methods.

Artifact Description

A retreat center with an eco-spiritual focus is one way to introduce a Christian to the connection between stewardship of creation and one's relationship with God. The website will be used in order to connect people to the retreat center. It will serve as a "how to" source for spiritual formation and implementation of permaculture design methods. The website will also include a blog for the purpose of personalizing the retreat center by sharing transformation that takes place at the retreat center. For example, the blog will include the addition of items such as the addition of a food forest, or a rainwater catchment system. It will also include parts of daily life at Poustinia Garden and conversations with God.

Audience

The primary users of this website will be those who are seeking a Christian retreat center with an eco-spiritual focus. It is also for those who have been to the retreat center, and those who would like to create their own eco-spiritually focused space. People searching the internet for a Christian retreat center that has an ecological aspect to it will discover the Poustinia Garden website. It will give them information such as accommodations, availability, and pricing. The retreatants can use the website before they arrive in order to familiarize themselves with different types of prayer or gardening. For those who have been to the retreat center, the website can be used for further spiritual formation, or to implement aspects of permaculture design that were experienced while at Poustinia Garden. For those who don't attend a retreat, it can still be used to create their own space for spiritual formation and/or implement permaculture design in their own space. Finally, it will offer a platform to advertise classes or workshops held at Poustinia Garden. Those who use the website will be able to plan their retreat or use it to create their own space in their current location. The point of the website is for planning purposes more than for educational purposes, though it is possible the website will educate.

Goals and Strategies

The purpose of the website is to impart information about Poustinia Garden Retreat Center, spiritual formation, and permaculture. The website is user friendly, so that anyone can take the information from the website and start to use it right away. The website currently lacks photographs; one goal is to collect and post photographs of the retreat center facilities, gardens, and use of alternative resources for power and water as

the systems are put in place. In the early stages of development of the retreat center website it will not have many photographs until progress is made on the grounds. The website will provide information about the retreat center and provide specific tools that can be used.

Website Scope and Content

Like the actual retreat center, the website focus is on spiritual formation and care for the earth through the use of permaculture design methods.

Artifact B will include:

1. Screen shots of the website, including, but not limited to: About Poustinia Garden Retreat Center, Spiritual Formation, and Permaculture Design.
2. Content included under menu headings of Spiritual Formation and Permaculture Design will provide tools for observation and practical ways to implement spiritual formation and permaculture design methods.
3. It will include a blog that will have topics of soul care and soil care as they relate to the retreat center.

Under the menu heading “Spiritual Formation,” there will be tools for personal observation and practical application, titled “Consolation and Desolation,” “Solitude,” “Rule of Life,” and “Prayer.” They can be used and accessed as a part of the retreat experience, especially if it is the person’s first time taking a retreat of solitude. It can be used before the retreat experience in order to prepare the individual for the retreat experience. Finally, it can be used after the retreat experience to continue the retreatant’s journey of spiritual formation and creation care.

Under the menu heading “Permaculture Design,” there will be tools for observation and practical application of the land and natural resources. This information can be used by the retreatant, either before or after they have had the retreat experience, in order to implement restorative and self-sustainable measures to their own space. Below is a list of pages on the website. In the list below, the titles to the left are the main menus. Those under each main menu are the secondary menus.

Home

About us

What to Expect

Guided Retreat Options

Spiritual Formation

Consolation & Desolation

Rule of Life

Prayer

Lectio Divina

Ignatian Prayer

Personalizing Scripture

Praying the Psalms

The Examen

Intercessory Prayer

Praise & Thanksgiving

Prayer Walk

Suggested Links

Permaculture Design

Design & Mapping

Natural Resources

Water

Energy

Gardening Methods

Where to Begin

Deep Mulching Method

Raised Beds

Hugelkultur

Keyhole Garden

Suggested Links

Resources Needed

The website budget will be minimal. I will use WordPress for the website platform and a WordPress domain name. By doing this there will be no out of pocket expense for the website. If the website grows to the point where audio and video are required, the website will be upgraded from the free WordPress package to one of their paid packages. These packages range from \$4.00 per month to \$24.92 per month.²⁰⁵ The author has a working knowledge of WordPress. Therefore, the author will create the website and populate it with the above-mentioned information. The greatest resource

²⁰⁵ The pricing for WordPress, accessed on November 2, 2017, <https://wordpress.com/pricing/>.

needed for this artifact is time, rather than finances to hire a professional web designer. The anticipated amount of time to develop the website is about 200 hours.

Promotion

The overall marketing strategy for the Poustinia Garden Retreat Center is through the website and word of mouth. Word of mouth will start with the groups and connections of the author. Some of those connections are pastors and spiritual directors. Spiritual directors commonly get away for personal retreats, thus the center is a good resource. This will give them a retreat option for those they give spiritual direction to. Spiritual directors also often suggest their directees take personal retreats. The author plans to share the Poustinia Garden Retreat Center and website with this group of spiritual directors. As a pastor, the author is connected with pastors and lay leaders within and outside her denomination; she will make the retreat center and website available to them as well.

Timeline for Website Development

Design of the website started in June 2017. The design and major content will be complete by January 2019. Due to the living nature of a blog, this website will continue to have content added for the duration of its lifetime. The “About” menu will not be completed until the retreat center is ready to receive guests. It will have information about our objectives, who we are, location, availability, and pricing. The projected date for receiving guest is summer of 2019.

SECTION SIX: POSTSCRIPT

When I started this project that led to Poustinia Garden, I was a prison chaplain. My position was as the director of an eighteen-month residential Christian discipleship program in the women's prison. A whole wing, twenty-eight beds, in the prison was set aside for this program. The women lived together and did the program together. Initially I entered the Leadership and Spiritual Formation DMin program through George Fox University with the intention of researching and developing a residential-type discipleship curriculum for a non-residential setting. In other words, I wanted to answer the question, "Could there be a discipleship program with the level of commitment, community, and accountability of a residential program for any Christian as a part of their daily life?" Discipleship, spiritual formation, teaching, mentoring, and leading were all things that I excelled in. So, I was interested in putting those skills to use in developing and providing a program for those who wanted a more intimate relationship with God.

In the first semester of the Leadership and Spiritual Formation DMin program, I researched residential discipleship through the monastic lifestyle and the Desert Mothers and Fathers. I discovered that in some cases there was a connection between one's relationship with God and one's relationship with creation. For example, the Franciscans recognize the intrinsic value of all creation. Further research led me to Catherine Doherty, who brought the poustinia to North America from Russia. During this same semester, in my personal time, I found myself doing a lot of research about permaculture and restorative methods of caring for the earth. It has also been a long-time dream of mine to have a small retreat center, a place a person could go for a time of silence and

solitude. Due to the studies on permaculture and restorative methods of earth care, I started to shift my focus from a discipleship curriculum to a retreat center with a focus on spiritual formation and ecotheology.

My advisor, Dr. Carole Spencer, encouraged me to research making a connection between earth care and soul care that takes place at a single retreat center. It made sense that the two could be combined. In the second semester I researched creation care and permaculture. This is what led me on a journey to creating a Christian retreat center that implements permaculture design methods on the grounds. There are several Christian retreat centers, and some are set up specifically for personal retreats. There are Christian retreat centers that are in beautiful settings in nature. I was unable to find one that implemented intentional creation care using permaculture design methods. There are also several schools set up that teach permaculture, although they are not specifically Christian. In the third semester, I focused my research on the Franciscan perspective of earth care. In the fourth semester, my research focused on eco-spirituality. There are aspects from each of these academic essays in this dissertation.

This project was based on the desert experience of the Desert Mothers and Fathers and on the principles of permaculture developed by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren. Even though neither Bill Mollison nor David Holmgren are Christians, their observations and implementation of restoring desolate lands is reflective of the restorative nature of God. Therefore, it makes sense that a place dedicated to create an environment for intimacy with God could include permaculture design.

It is my hope, at some point, to explore the idea of adding a discipleship dimension to the retreat center, an academy of sorts that would include the traditional

disciplines and restorative creation care. At some point Poustinia Garden Retreat Center could include a long-term residential aspect for the purpose of discipleship and teaching restorative creation care. This discipleship program would include one's relationship with God and with creation. Another area I would like to explore is the way churches use the land their church building sits on. Is there a better way of using the church grounds than for merely a manicured lawn? At some point, on the Poustinia Garden Retreat Center website, I'd like to include a church specific page. This page would include plans to turn the church grounds into a food forest that could feed its members and neighbors. It could also include a rainwater catchment system for the church watering needs. Poustinia Garden could offer a service that would educate church leaders and church members on the principles of permaculture. It could help design a plan that could feed their congregation and their neighborhood.

APPENDIX A

POUSTINIA GARDEN RETREAT CENTER PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN

Executive Summary

Many Christians lack intimacy in their relationship with God due to being overly busy. Many do not connect their relationship with God to their relationship with creation. A Christian retreat center with guided opportunities of intimacy with God and connection with creation is a way Christians can grow closer to God and creation. Though there are other retreat center where a person can take a personal retreat, there are none, that I have found that are specifically designed for Christian spiritual formation with an ecological focus.

Business Model

This retreat center will be set up similar in fashion to a bed and breakfast in that it will be very small, owner run and operated.

Facilities – Poustinia Garden Retreat Center will have two or three small cabins that can house up to two people each. The cabins will each have a rain water catchment system, small solar power system, composting toilets, and wood heat. The cabins will be placed in a wheel design with the hub being an outdoor kitchen. The outdoor kitchen will include a fire pit and grill, a cob oven, raised bed herb garden, benches and tables, a ramada for cover and a rainwater catchment system for its water source.

Grounds – Poustinia Garden sits on 20 acres of forested land in the Pacific Northwest. It will use permaculture design for the grounds. Close to the buildings will be what needs the most care, kitchen gardens. It will use various gardening techniques all of which are polyculture. These methods will include, deep mulch beds, raised box beds, keyhole garden, hugelkultur, and a food forest. Farther out from the buildings will be the “wild.” In the wild there are trails

through the evergreen forest with several places to sit and relax. A creek flows across the property.

Opportunity

Life is fast-paced and most American's time is filled past the margins of their day. People need an opportunity to get away and "unplug" for a time of rest, restoration, and quiet time with God. The mountain setting in the forest with limited connection to the outside world will give people this opportunity. Poustinia Garden Retreat Center will be available to anyone who has a desire to grow closer in their relationship with God and who would like to learn how to take better care of creation. There will be three areas of focused opportunities: spiritual formation, creation care, and nature walks. Spiritual formation opportunities will include, spiritual direction from a trained spiritual director, prayer walks through the forest, time of silence and solitude, and uninterrupted time alone with God in nature.

Creation care opportunities will include organic food growing, harvesting, food storage, and meal preparation using this food. Food preparation will include different types of cooking methods that will take place indoors and outdoors. These cooking methods will include cooking with a wood stove, cob oven, and solar oven. Water conservation will be taught through the installation or use of rainwater harvesting systems. These systems will include ground works, such as the use of keyline design for water flow through the property, and rainwater catchment off the roofs of the buildings for household use. The retreatant will have opportunity to learn about solar power either by using it or taking part in its installation. They will have an opportunity to learn about earthen construction. Nature walks will include education about the local plants and animals and opportunity for prayer. These walks are designed to bridge the gap between the retreatant's relationship with God and their relationship with God's creation.

Execution

Poustinia Garden Retreat Center will be a small family owned and operated retreat center. It will have no more than 6 retreatants at any time, so it is manageable by two people. The cabins will be available by reservation only. Dates of availability will be posted on the Poustinia Garden website. Reservations can be made through the website or over the phone.

It will be run in a similar fashion as a bed and breakfast. The owner will take care of the facilities and meals. One meal a day will be provided and prepared by the owner, one by the retreatant, and one meal will be a collaboration between the owner and the retreatant. The food will be grown and raised on the property or purchased from local farmers. The owner will also serve as the onsite spiritual director and lead some of the learning experiences mentioned above. An outside expert will be brought in for some of the learning experiences mentioned above that are beyond the owner's expertise.

Intention of Business Start

Poustinia Garden will operate as a for-profit business rather than a non-profit business. It will operate in a similar fashion to a bed and breakfast or a small family farm, in that it will be located on private property that includes the housing for the owner operator. The proceeds will go back into the property for further development of systems such as food forests, gardens, animal husbandry, water systems, alternative energy, and guest cabins.

One of the ethics of permaculture is to return the surplus. Once Poustinia Garden systems are all in place the surplus will return to the community. The surplus of food produced will be given to local non-profits such as food pantries, churches, senior living centers, or other agencies that give to those in need of food. The surplus of monetary funds will be used to teach and help

churches or other non-profits to transform their landscapes into edible landscape. It could also be used to build water systems, to include water catchment and grey water use.

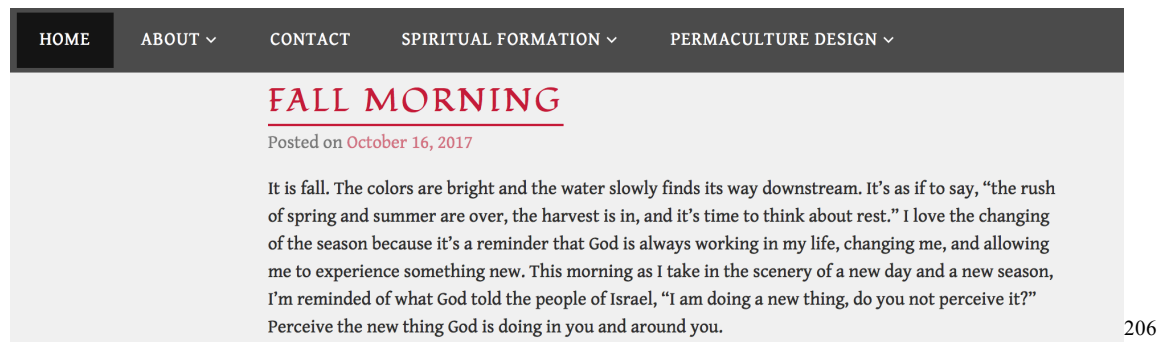
Poustinia Garden will be registered with the state and federal government.

APPENDIX B

POUSTINIA GARDEN RETREAT CENTER WEBSITE

I chose to design a website titled, Poustinia Garden Retreat, as an interactive tool for those who attend the retreat center during and after their retreat. It can also be used by those who would like to explore the combination of spiritual formation and permaculture. This section includes screenshots of the website, poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com. The language on the website is intentionally more personal. The website address is <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com>. The following will be a brief explanation of portions of the website.

The “Home” menu is a blog. The purpose for the blog is to create a relational site. It will have reflective devotionals and article about the retreat center’s use of permaculture.



The “About Us” menu tells the story about Poustinia Garden Retreat Center, future plans, and what we believe. The “What We Believe” menu was added in order to inform those searching the website that this is a Christian retreat center with an ecological focus. There are other retreat centers on the internet that have an ecological focus that are not Christian. It is easy to find those with Hindu and Buddhist influence. Ecology Retreat

²⁰⁶ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com>.

Center,²⁰⁷ Hawaiian Sanctuary,²⁰⁸ and Awake in the Wild²⁰⁹ are to name a few.²¹⁰ It will also include pictures of accommodations, availability, and pricing of the accommodations once the retreat center is in operation. There is a dropdown menu titled, “What to Expect” and one titled, “Guided Retreat Options.” The purpose of these two dropdown menus, is to prepare the retreatant for an experience that includes one with God and with creation.

²⁰⁷ Accessed November 28, 2017, <http://www.ecologyretreatcentre.com>.

²⁰⁸ Accessed November 28, 2017 <http://hawaiiansanctuary.com>.

²⁰⁹ Accessed November 28, 2017, <http://www.awakeinthewild.com/nature-retreats/>.

²¹⁰ Here are a few more websites of outdoor nature based retreat centers, none of them are Christian, Shambhala Mountain Center <http://www.shambhalamountain.org>, Breitenbush Hot Springs <https://breitenbush.com>, Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health <https://kripalu.org/about>.

[HOME](#)
[ABOUT ▾](#)
[CONTACT](#)
[SPIRITUAL FORMATION ▾](#)
[PERMACULTURE DESIGN ▾](#)

ABOUT

FUTURE PLAN

This retreat center is not yet operational. Our goal is to have it available for guest in the summer of 2019. The information on this website is our plan for the retreat center.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

We are Christian in our belief and adopt the Apostles Creed.

I believe in God, the father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
 I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
 He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
 He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
 He descended to the dead.
 On the third day he rose again.
 He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
 He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the Holy Catholic Church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body,
 and the life everlasting. Amen.

²¹¹ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/about/>.

HOME
ABOUT
CONTACT
SPIRITUAL FORMATION
PERMACULTURE DESIGN

WHAT IS POUSTINIA GARDEN RETREAT CENTER?

Poustinia Garden is a place where you can come and spend time away from your everyday life for the intended purpose of drawing closer to God. It is also a place where you can experience and learn how to take better care of God's creation.

In the mid 3rd century a movement was started by Christians who wanted to dedicate their lives to God in solitude and prayer. They headed to the deserts of Egypt. People would often seek them out for spiritual guidance. Today they are known as the Desert Mothers and Fathers. Poustinia means desert in Russian. A poustinia is a single room dwelling, usually outside of a village, where the poustinik (a person called by God to live in the desert) would live a life of prayer for a period of time. For more information read Catherine Doherty's book *"Poustinia: Christian Spirituality of the East for Western Man"*.

The garden systems used at this retreat center incorporate permaculture design methods. It will include a food forest, other gardening methods, and ways to take advantage of natural resources in such a way that is restorative rather than destructive.

Poustinia Garden is where the Desert Fathers and Mothers meet Permaculture, a place for restoration of soul and soil.

212

HOME
ABOUT
CONTACT
SPIRITUAL FORMATION
PERMACULTURE DESIGN

WHERE ARE WE?

We are located on 20 acres of forest in the Pacific Northwest.

YOU'RE INVITED

This is a space where people can come for a personal retreat of silence and solitude. While here, you will be invited to experience the benefits of a food forest, use of alternative energy sources, and water conservation methods. As I create this space I will share my methods so you can do the same wherever you are. You're invited to use any part of what you discover here for your own purposes, whether it's the devotionals and methods of prayer, water and power systems, or food production. Most of all you're invited to a closer relationship with God and in response to God, to be an agent of restoration for the part of creation you connect with.

213

²¹² Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/about/>.

²¹³ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/about/>.

WHAT TO EXPECT

The Facilities

You will have your choice of one of three dry cabins. A dry cabin has no running water, though water is available. The largest cabin, 12×24, and can sleep three. It is equipped with a gas stove, refrigerator, and wood stove. It also contains a shower and a composting toilet. The other two cabins are smaller, 12×16, and can sleep two people. They each have a wood stove for heat. The two smaller cabins are built out of all natural materials sourced from the property. One cabin is log construction and the other is earthen construction. All three cabins collect rain water for their primary water source.

Each cabin is set up in permaculture zones. Right outside of the door will be an herb and salad garden that is for your use. You'll be invited to plant, care for, and harvest this garden.

There is a community outdoor kitchen, it includes an earthen oven, a grill pit, tables, and benches. There is also a wash house with shower and toilet facilities.

Food for the meals will be provided by the retreat center. All of the food will either be grown and raised at the retreat center using organic methods or sourced from local farmers who use organic methods. Breakfast will be prepared by retreat staff, lunch by you, and dinner as a combined effort. Please let us know of any allergies or preferences ahead of time.

214

²¹⁴ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/what-to-expect/>.

HOME	ABOUT ▾	CONTACT	SPIRITUAL FORMATION ▾	PERMACULTURE DESIGN ▾
------	---------	---------	-----------------------	-----------------------

Your Retreat

The purpose of this retreat center is for intentional connection with God and with creation. We have two options for a guided retreat experience. One includes a rhythm of work and rest, focusing on connecting with God and creation. The second is a retreat of solitude that includes prayer, nature walks, journaling, and spiritual direction.

Participation Opportunities:

- Plant, care for, or harvest a food forest.
- Use alternative sources for power and heat.
- Learn about water conservation methods for personal and outside use.
- Learn about different gardening methods such as food forest, hugelkultur, keyhole garden, and raised beds.
- Learn about food storage, canning, root cellar, and dehydrating.
- Gather eggs and care for chickens.
- Use alternative cooking methods such as, a rocket stove, wood oven, or sun oven.
- Meals will be prepared with food from the retreat center gardens, fowl, or local small farms.
- Gather and cut firewood.

Prayer:

- You will have the option for a spiritual director provided by the retreat center.
- Prayer walk through the forest.
- Prayer chapel.

215

²¹⁵ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/what-to-expect/>.

HOME
ABOUT ▾
CONTACT
SPIRITUAL FORMATION ▾
PERMACULTURE DESIGN ▾

GUIDED RETREAT OPTIONS

RHYTHM OF WORK AND REST RETREAT

Morning
Personal time of Scripture reading and prayer (1 hr)
Breakfast prepared by retreat staff (45 min)
Food Sustainability – Gardening, harvesting, and food storage (3 hrs)

Afternoon
Lunch, self-prepared (1 hr)
Prayer walk or prayer in prayer chapel (1.5 hrs)
Infrastructure – Learn about water systems and alternative power (3 hrs)

Evening
Dinner, joint preparation and cleanup with retreat staff (2 hrs)
Spiritual direction, rest, prayer walk, or time of solitude (1 hr)
Turn in for the evening

216

HOME
ABOUT ▾
CONTACT
SPIRITUAL FORMATION ▾
PERMACULTURE DESIGN ▾

SOLITUDE RETREAT

Morning
Personal time of Scripture reading and prayer
Breakfast prepared by retreat staff
Solitude and prayer

Afternoon
Lunch prepared by retreat staff
Prayer walk through the forest with benches for rest and prayer.

Evening
Dinner prepared by retreat staff
Spiritual direction
Journal
Prayer

217

²¹⁶ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/guided-retreat-options/>.

The primary purpose of the “Contact Us” menu is for a retreatant, or potential retreatant, to make reservations or to ask any questions he or she might have.

HOME ABOUT CONTACT SPIRITUAL FORMATION PERMACULTURE DESIGN

If you would like to contact me please feel free to send me an email at
poustiniagarden@gmail.com

Name (required)

Email (required)

Website

Comment (required)

SUBMIT »

218

²¹⁷ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/guided-retreat-options/>.

²¹⁸ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/contact/>.

The “Spiritual Formation” menu has a brief description of spiritual formation. It has four sub menus, “Consolation & Desolation,” “Rule of Life,” “Prayer,” and “Suggested Links.” “Consolation & Desolation” will have content that will define consolation and desolation, it will also include information about personality types using the Enneagram and Myers Briggs. “Rule of Life” will include content that will define a rule of life, how to use one, and some examples of a rule of life. “Prayer” will have several forms of prayer that will give examples of prayer that include interaction or consideration of creation one could use while on their retreat. It gives an explanation and example of the prayer style.

HOME ABOUT CONTACT SPIRITUAL FORMATION PERMACULTURE DESIGN

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Spiritual Formation is the transforming process into the likeness of Christ for the sake of others and the glory of God. For this type of transformation to take place, the person who desires to be like Christ will intentionally partner with the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) through surrendered obedience lived out in everyday life through interaction with others. It is a life of rhythm, alone with God, and joining God among God's people and creation. It is listening to God when alone and when in a crowd, and being obedient to His voice.

Part of one's intentional partnership with the Trinity is daily time alone with God, in prayer and in His Word; not merely as a task but as communication for the sake of building relationship. Prayer and reading the Scripture is as much about speaking as it is about listening. Annual or semi-annual times alone with God for extended periods of time, several days or even weeks, should be a part of one's rhythm with God.

219

A short description of consolation and desolation have been added to the website in order to introduce the retreatant to the taking time to listen to what is going on in their own spirit. When one starts to understand what is happening within their own soul he or

²¹⁹ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/spiritual-formation/>.

she will start to understand how God has created them. There is also a brief connection of consolation and desolation of creation. This is meant to move the retreatant toward reverence of creation, it is not meant for worship of creation.

[HOME](#)
[ABOUT ▾](#)
[CONTACT](#)
[SPIRITUAL FORMATION ▾](#)
[PERMACULTURE DESIGN ▾](#)

CONSOLATION & DESOLATION

Part of Spiritual Formation is knowing yourself well enough to know what needs to be transformed and how God has created you. It is not uncommon that many people have not taken the time to find out how God has created them. Every person is uniquely created by God with differences in physical attributes, differences in personality, likes and dislikes, the things that draw one closer to God, and things that separate them from God. It is easy to recognize the physical characteristics that are different, and often personality characteristics; but have you taken the time to recognize consolation and desolation in your life? Consolation is that draw within you that brings you closer to God. It is that place where you feel like all is well, even though circumstances may actually be falling apart. Desolation is that place where you feel confusion, frustration, like things are caving in on you, even though circumstances around you may be fine. Consolation is that sweet spot and desolation is drudgery. This will take self-observation to discover.

Many Christians have been fooled into believing that spending time in self-observation is somehow wrong, or even bordering on sin. Yet, how can a person transform into the image of Christ if he or she has no idea who they are, or who God created them to be? There are several tools available to help you to understand who God created you to be, for example the [Enneagram](#) test or the [Myers-Briggs Type Indicator](#). Both of these tests can be helpful in understanding your personality type and why you respond the way you do in many situation. They can also help you understand why not everyone thinks like you think.

Another tool to help you discover who God created you to be is through spiritual direction.

220

²²⁰ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/consolation-desolation/>.

HOME

ABOUT ▾

CONTACT

SPIRITUAL FORMATION ▾

PERMACULTURE DESIGN ▾

THE EARTH'S DARK NIGHT

After you've listened to your own soul and paid attention to the consolation and desolation within yourself, consider opening your eyes and ears to the **consolation and desolation of creation**. You can do this while you are here at Poustinia Gardens, at your own home, or anywhere you may be.

Observe – What do you see? What do you hear? Is creation responding out of consolation or desolation? Is God asking you to respond? If so, how?

221

²²¹ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/consolation-desolation/>.

The first sample of Lectio Divina includes Psalms 91:1-4. This Psalm is a celebration Psalm of God's creation. The second sample is about God's provision.

HOME
ABOUT ▾
CONTACT
SPIRITUAL FORMATION ▾
PERMACULTURE DESIGN ▾

LECTIO DIVINA

Praying the Scriptures – Lectio Divina means divine reading. This is one of the most ancient types of prayer.

How to Practice Lectio Divina

First choose a Scripture passage that you wish to pray. You may choose to use this method to slowly work through a particular book of the Bible, or to even go through the entire Bible. You may end up reading a very short passage or it may be longer. This will be between you and the Holy Spirit.

Once you know the passage you will use, take a moment to settle your thoughts. Spend a few moments in silence, say a short breath prayer, or whatever helps you settle your thoughts.

Slowly start to read the passage and allow God's Word to speak to your soul. As you read in this way you may sense that there is a word or short phrase that stands out.

Take that phrase or word and sit with it, memorize it, or repeat it to yourself. Allow it to interact with whatever is going on inside you . . . your concerns, ideas, plans, memories, or even distractions. Allow God to invite you into a conversation about what He wants to show you. Surrender it to God and praise Him.

Don't try to push anything or add something that isn't there. Don't become anxious if nothing comes to you or if a word sticks in your thoughts and you can't figure out why. There is no goal other than to be present with God while in the Scriptures.

222

²²² Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/lectio-divina/>.

Example 1:

“Heaven is declaring God’s glory;
 the sky is proclaiming His handiwork.
 One day gushes the news to the next,
 and one night informs another what needs to be known.
 Of course, there’s no speech, no words—
 their voices can’t be heard—
 but their sound extends throughout the world;
 their words reach the ends of the earth.
 God has made a tent in heaven for the sun.” Psalm 19:1-4 (CEB)

Maybe the words, “**No speech, no words**” are what stand out to you. Some continued thoughts on that phrase might be: The day and night, the sky and earth have a language all of their own. It’s not through words that informs or that information is revealed. Am I able to hear the declaration of the sky and able to join in its expression of glory to God?

Then you might pray a prayer something like this: Lord, as I pause in this moment, I see the great beauty you have given for your glory. Thank you for the invitation for me to enjoy it with you. What do you want to tell me through your glorious handiwork, the whisper of the wind, the warmth of the sun, the smell of the earth, the hum of the humming bird’s wings?
 In this moment my soul is content as I sit here with you, in this place enjoying your handiwork, like two friends enjoying a cup of tea.

223

²²³ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/lectio-divina/>.

HOME	ABOUT ▾	CONTACT	SPIRITUAL FORMATION ▾	PERMACULTURE DESIGN ▾
------	---------	---------	-----------------------	-----------------------

Example 2:

“Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Seat them in groups of about fifty.’ They did so, and everyone was seated. He took the five loaves and the two fish, looked up to heaven, blessed them, and broke them and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. Everyone ate until they were full, and the disciples filled twelve baskets with the leftovers.” Luke 9:14-17 (CEB)

Maybe the phrase, “**Blessed them**” is what stands out to you. Some continued thoughts might be: Jesus blessed the bread and the fish. I had never thought about blessing bread and fish before, or anything that wasn’t a person. Blessing can be extended to not only humans, but to bread and fish, and...

Your prayer may be something like this: Lord, thank you for your blessing that extends beyond humans. Yes, this blessing was for the nourishment of the crowd; but it has opened my eyes to the power, and to the expanse of your blessing. It is beyond my thoughts or my imagination. Lord, who or what would you have me bless today? Thank you for showing me this detail of your word and your character.

224

Ignatian Prayer is another prayer type that is included for options for prayer. With this type of prayer, retreatants can put themselves in the scene of the passage that is being read. In the first examples the use of Genesis 1-2:4 is to give the retreatant an opportunity to place herself or himself at the creation scene. The second example uses Isaiah 6:1-8 in order to emphasize the holy of who God is and to bring the retreatant into the throne room of God.

HOME
ABOUT ▾
CONTACT
SPIRITUAL FORMATION ▾
PERMACULTURE DESIGN ▾

IGNATIAN PRAYER

The Ignatian prayer method is a virtual experience of scripture. This method was named after Ignatius of Loyola. In this method you read the scripture and then use your imagination by either observing the scene in your mind or by placing yourself in the scene.

Example 1:

Read Genesis 1-2:4 about the creation account. Imagine yourself being there, observing as God creates. Imagine the void. Imagine the chaos coming into order. Imagine the first day as God separates light from darkness. See the separation of the waters, the land, and the sky. Imagine as God fills the waters, the sky, and the earth. What do you see? How does it affect you? How is God asking you to respond to creation? Engage with God about what you are experiencing. There may be other questions that God poses for you to answer. After you finish, take time to journal anything you'd like to remember, explore deeper, or for the purpose of accountability.

225

²²⁵ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/ignatian-prayer/>.

Personalizing Scripture is a part of the website as another way a person can connect with God and creation. The passages used as examples are for the purpose of showing God's authority over creation and what we, as humans, can learn from creation.

HOME
ABOUT ▾
CONTACT
SPIRITUAL FORMATION ▾
PERMACULTURE DESIGN ▾

PERSONALIZING SCRIPTURE

In this prayer method, take the scripture and insert your own name, as if it were written directly to you. Then respond in prayer as if the words of scripture are a conversation with you. Of course, much of the Scripture was written to a specific group of people or to a single person; but the same truths will apply to you.

Here are some passages you may want to consider while on retreat:

“When I close the sky so that there is no rain or I order the locusts to consume the land or I send a plague against my people, if my people who belong to me will humbly pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land. From now on my eyes will be open and my ears will pay attention to the prayers offered in this place, because I have chosen this temple and declared it holy so that my name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.” 2 Chronicles 7:12-16 (CEB)

“The whole creation waits breathless with anticipation for the revelation of God's sons and daughters. Creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice—it was the choice of the one who subjected it—but in the hope that the creation itself will be set free from slavery to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of God's children. We know that the whole creation is groaning together and suffering labor pains up until now. And it's not only the creation. We ourselves who have the Spirit as the first crop of the harvest also groan inside as we wait to be adopted and for our bodies to be set free.” Romans 8:19-23 (CEB)

226

²²⁶ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/personalizing-scripture/>.

“But ask the beasts, and they will teach you;
 the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you;
 or the bushes of the earth, and they will teach you;
 and the fish of the sea will declare to you.
 Who among all these does not know
 that the hand of the Lord has done this?
 In his hand is the life of every living thing
 and the breath of all mankind.
 Does not the ear test words
 as the palate tastes food?
 Wisdom is with the aged,
 and understanding in length of days. Job 12:7-12 (ESV)

227

²²⁷ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/personalizing-scripture/>.

There are many Psalms that use aspects of creation in expression to God. In the prayer practice of praying the Psalms I chose Psalm 62:1-3, because it uses aspects of creation “dry and tired land” to express how the psalmist feels. This is another way of connecting with what God has created. It brings awareness to creation and how the retreatant can relate to creation itself.

HOME	ABOUT ▾	CONTACT	SPIRITUAL FORMATION ▾	PERMACULTURE DESIGN ▾
------	---------	---------	-----------------------	-----------------------

PRAYING THE PSALMS

The Psalms are actually a collection of prayers. It is perfectly fine to use the words of the Psalms to express what is on your own heart. You may also write your own Psalm. Here are the first three verses of Psalm 63. I will give you an example of rewriting/wording the Psalm in order to personalize it.

“God! My God! It’s you—
 I search for you!
 My whole being thirsts for you!
 My body desires you
 in a dry and tired land,
 no water anywhere.
 Yes, I’ve seen you in the sanctuary;
 I’ve seen your power and glory.
 My lips praise you
 because your faithful love
 is better than life itself!” Psalm 63:1-3 (CEB)

228

HOME	ABOUT ▾	CONTACT	SPIRITUAL FORMATION ▾	PERMACULTURE DESIGN ▾
------	---------	---------	-----------------------	-----------------------

Example:

God, you are my God! You are the only One for me. I want so badly to see you, I search for you with all of my heart. My whole being thirsts for you, I ache for you, I don’t know how to live without you. My desire is like the desire of the ground, cracked and dry for need of water. I have seen You and experienced your presence both in corporate worship while singing and praising you, and in private moments when it’s just been you and me. I’ve seen your power move and have been led to tears due to your magnificent presence. I praise you Lord! I praise you because you are faithful, you are love. Your faithful love is better than life itself! Amen

229

²²⁸ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/praying-the-psalms/>.

²²⁹ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/praying-the-psalms/>.

The Examen prayer was added to the website in order to help the retreatant be intentional about reviewing their day and asking God's opinion of how they lived that day. It is also a good way for the retreatant to be specific in their relationship not only with God, but with all of God's creation, human and nonhuman.

HOME
ABOUT ▾
CONTACT
SPIRITUAL FORMATION ▾
PERMACULTURE DESIGN ▾

THE EXAMEN

This is a prayer of examination of your feeling and desires, what brings you connection with God (consolation) and what brings you disconnection from God (desolation). In this prayer, you are paying attention to your soul. This is often done at the end of each day. As you reflect over the events of the day pay attention to where you detected God's presence and discerned his direction. Through this practice you can begin to see God's hand in your life and in all of humanity. There are several ways this can be done. Here's an example of one way:

1. Reflect over your day with Jesus by your side. Ask him to point out the places where you fell short, sinned, disappointed him, or felt distant from him.
2. Surrender those moments to Jesus.
3. Walk through the day again and ask him where he was pleased, or where there was joy in your soul.
4. Pray about that, giving God praise, asking a question, or seeking him more.
5. Pray for the day to come.

While on retreat at *Poustinia Garden*, consider this pray to include a focus on your relationship with creation. Ask God to show you how you have fallen short, and where you have pleased Him in the way you treat creation. Ask God what changes you should make. Pray for the day to come and how God wants you to interact with creation.

The point is to discover when you've felt close to God and when you've felt far from him, consolation and desolation.

230

²³⁰ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/the-examen/>.

Intercessory prayer was selected to help the retreatant start to learn to not only pray for other humans, but for nonhuman creation as well.

[HOME](#)
[ABOUT ▾](#)
[CONTACT](#)
[SPIRITUAL FORMATION ▾](#)
[PERMACULTURE DESIGN ▾](#)

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Intercessory prayer is praying on behalf of another.

Spend time praying for others, for example: those we love, those we have conflict with, and political leaders.

Another area to consider for intercessory prayer is for creation. Ask God to show you how to pray for the condition of the earth, the care of animals, the treatment of plants, the quality of the air, and the use and care of water.

231

²³¹ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/intercessory-prayer/>.

The purpose of the prayer walk is for giving the retreatant an opportunity to engage with God while walking through God's creation. There are two examples of this type of walk and prayer. The first directly engages the individual with creation and initiates a conversation with God in regard to what he or she sees in creation. The caution is that this is not to be confused with pray to creation itself, nor to seek creation for answers, knowledge, or wisdom of some kind. It is to connect with the Creator and to gain a better understanding of creation. The second prayer walk, is an intentional walk down a particular path with a destination in mind. The path meanders through the property toward the destination of a small bench; sometimes close to the destination, and sometimes farther away. The trail may pass by labeled plants, some eatable and some for ornamentation. While on the walk to the destination of the bench, the individual is naming their burdens and asking God to take them. While at the bench the retreatant will have opportunity to sit with God to ponder the love of God for them, and for all creation. Finally, on the walk back the retreatant will ask God to show them what direction The Creator would like them to take, or some change that may be needed in their life.

HOME

ABOUT ▾

CONTACT

SPIRITUAL FORMATION ▾

PERMACULTURE DESIGN ▾

PRAYER WALK

WALK & PRAY

Simply take a walk through the grounds. You may use a trail or venture through the woods. As you walk, talk with God as you would talk with a friend. Experience the moment together. Tell God your joys and concerns or praise and worship Him. This is the type of walk that Adam and Eve may have enjoyed with God each evening before the sun went down. "And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day..." Genesis 3:8a. Another example of someone walking with God was Enoch, "Enoch walked with God." Genesis 5:22.

LEARNING FROM CREATION

Another idea to consider during your prayer walk is to learn from creation. Remember, prayer is conversation with God, both speaking and listening to God. Learning from creation is a practice of listening. Job 12:7-12 instructs us to ask what creation can teach us. In this prayer exercise you will actually ask God what you are to learn from creation as you ponder a tree, rock, bush, or any other part of the natural world you'd like to observe.

232

HOME

ABOUT ▾

CONTACT

SPIRITUAL FORMATION ▾

PERMACULTURE DESIGN ▾

INSTRUCTIONS:

Choose to walk on a trail or go into the woods. Find a rock, a tree, a bush, or the creek. Sit in front of your chosen part of creation and ask the Creator what He wants you to learn from this part of his creation. Just sit quietly and listen for God's answer to you. If you don't hear anything from God, you can share with God what you are learning from this rock, tree, or whatever you chose to focus on. Write down what you have learned and about your whole experience. Then share it that evening at meal time or with a friend when you arrive home.

For example: You may find a huge rock. The rock may have moss growing on it, chunks of the rock might be missing, it may have a lone tree sprouting up in this impossible place to grow. You may think about the fact that a rock is a mineral without life, yet it supports life, the life of the moss and the life of a tree. You may see insects on the rock, an ant carrying its meal back to its home. The rock is steady and does not move over hundreds of years, maybe even thousands. What can you learn from the rock? Maybe you learn that there can be life in hard places.

233

²³² Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/prayer-walk/>.

²³³ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/prayer-walk/>.

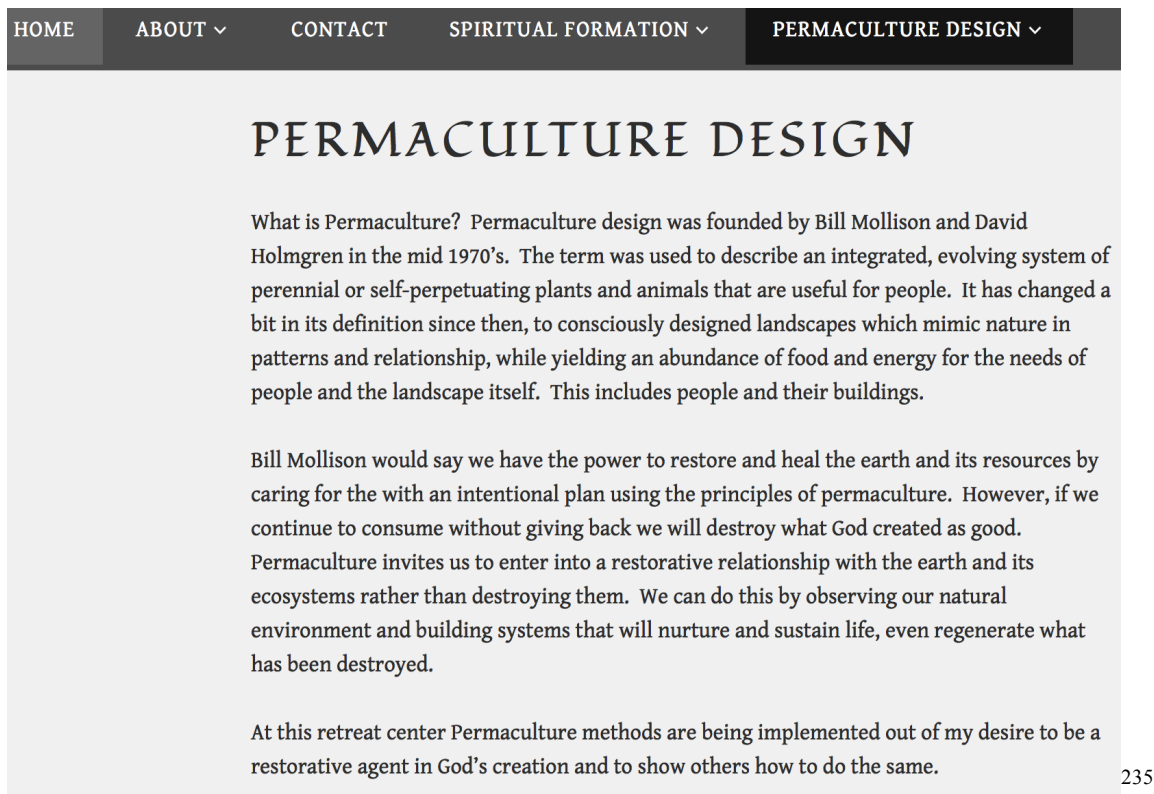
PRAYER TRAIL

Another type of prayer walk is a prayer trail. Our prayer trail is a path through foliage, mostly fruit bearing bushes. It leads to a bench, a place for quiet contemplation and time spent with God. As you walk down the path there will be moments when you feel like you're very close to your goal, time with God on the bench. Then moments later you find yourself walking away from your goal. You may want to talk to God about things you may need to let go of, ask God to take away the cares you may be carrying. Once you arrive to the bench take time to merely enjoy the presence of God. Know that you are loved by God as you sit together on the bench. Then as you walk back ask God if there is some special direction he would have for you, something you may need to change in your life, or some kind of new direction.

234

²³⁴ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/prayer-walk/>.

Under the “Permaculture Design” dropdown menu, there is a description of permaculture. There are four subordinate dropdown menus, “Mapping and Design,” “Natural Resources,” “Gardening Methods,” and “Permaculture Related Links.”



HOME ABOUT CONTACT SPIRITUAL FORMATION PERMACULTURE DESIGN

PERMACULTURE DESIGN

What is Permaculture? Permaculture design was founded by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren in the mid 1970's. The term was used to describe an integrated, evolving system of perennial or self-perpetuating plants and animals that are useful for people. It has changed a bit in its definition since then, to consciously designed landscapes which mimic nature in patterns and relationship, while yielding an abundance of food and energy for the needs of people and the landscape itself. This includes people and their buildings.

Bill Mollison would say we have the power to restore and heal the earth and its resources by caring for the with an intentional plan using the principles of permaculture. However, if we continue to consume without giving back we will destroy what God created as good. Permaculture invites us to enter into a restorative relationship with the earth and its ecosystems rather than destroying them. We can do this by observing our natural environment and building systems that will nurture and sustain life, even regenerate what has been destroyed.

At this retreat center Permaculture methods are being implemented out of my desire to be a restorative agent in God's creation and to show others how to do the same.

235

²³⁵ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/permaculture-design/>.

DESIGN & MAPPING

When it comes to mapping and design the first thing is to observe the land. Take the time to observe weather patterns during all four seasons.

Consider the following:

Wind – Directions and amount

Sun – Is your property shaded or have full sun?

Temperatures – First day of frost, last day of frost , highest & temp of the year

Rain – know your rainy and dry seasons

Terrain – flat, hilly, slight grade

Water Sources – well, creek, spring, pond, lake etc.

Once you know these things you can start planning what you would like to do with your place.

For example, in regard to using the information you gathered about temperature you may have discovered that the north side of your house is 15 to 20 degrees warmer than the south side of your house. You may want to plant trees in order to shade your house in the summer that let sun through during the winter in order to help in your heating and cooling costs.

You may want to use the south side of your house for your green house to extend your growing season.

236

²³⁶ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/design-mapping/>.

HOME ABOUT ▾ CONTACT SPIRITUAL FORMATION ▾ PERMACULTURE DESIGN ▾


In regard to the sun: What direction does the sun go over your house? Are you shaded part of the day by a mountain or a neighbor's trees? Is your property in the middle of a forest with very little sun exposure? Do you live farther north where the sun is very limited in winter and extended in summer? With this information you can take advantage of the use of the sun for your growing season, heating, and cooking.

Rainfall: If you discover you have several months each year with little to no rainfall you may have to consider creating storage in your design for those lean months, storage can come in the form of underground or on the surface. For example: you may want to use hugelculture where the wood that is buried stores water in much the same way as a sponge. You may want to consider key line swales in order to slow the movement of the water down as it leaves your property. Or you may consider a pond or some kind of rain catchment system. Your plans may even include all of these methods.

Google Earth is a tool you can use to help you map your property. Find your property, take a screen shot of it and then add the things you've observed to the map. Here is a picture of where Poustinia Garden Retreat Center will be. The red line is the property boarder, the blue line is a year round creek, the brown line is the drive way, the green box is a garden, and the blue box is a cabin. The property runs north and south. The dark green forest near the middle goes down a steep grade. The south west corner is at the base of a hill. We can use the information about the terrain in order to decide where to build buildings, keep or clear trees, use of water flow, and sunlight for gardens.

237

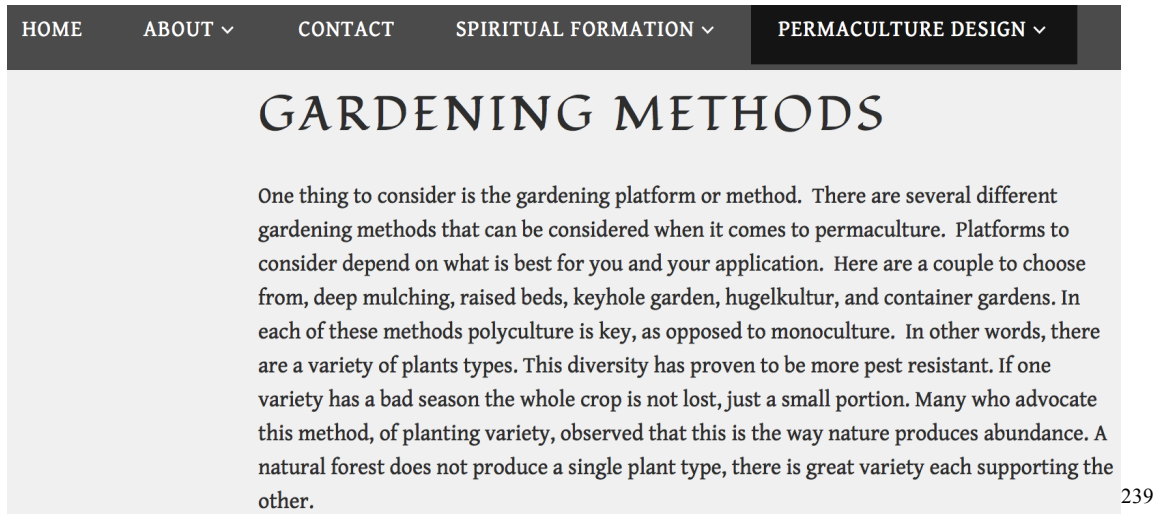
HOME ABOUT ▾ CONTACT SPIRITUAL FORMATION ▾ PERMACULTURE DESIGN ▾



238

²³⁷ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/design-mapping/>.

The website offers gardening methods. It is not a detailed guide on how to garden; however, there is room to expand this type of information on the website in the future. A drop down menu for basic gardening would include topics such as, companion planting, composting, a chart for planting times, and helpful gardening hints. The following are screenshots from the gardening dropdown menus.



239

²³⁸ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/design-mapping/>.

²³⁹ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/plants-garden/>.

One of the lesser known methods of gardening is hugelkultur. This is just one of the different methods discussed on the website. What makes this a useful method of gardening is that it is very versatile. It uses wood under the topsoil for the purpose of water conservation and plant nutrition. It can be done in the bottom of a framed raised bed for filler. It can be done as a raised bed using an earthen mound. The mound can travel along the keyline of the terrain, it can be a row mound, or simple round hill type mound.

HOME
ABOUT
CONTACT
SPIRITUAL FORMATION
PERMACULTURE DESIGN

HUGELKULTUR

Hugelkultur is the use of buried trees/wood as an underground water source. The wood absorbs moisture and in the dry season keeps the ground moist. Therefore, the plants planted on a hugelkultur bed need little to no watering. It can also be used in a raised bed, in order to keep the raised bed from drying out. It can be a raised bed itself by mounding the dirt over the wood. If done on keyline it can catch runoff water as it flows downhill. Keyline refers to the topographical lines. This is a picture that combines both hugelkultur and the food forest concept.

Design for CSC
Stelle, IL

Overstory
Semi-decid Fruit Trees – Black Locust (N)

Midstory
Hazelnut – Service Berry – Dwarf Fruit Trees
– Elderberry – Siberian pea shrub (N)

Understory
Gooseberry – Currants – Asparagus –
Rhubarb – Herbs – False Indigo (N)

Ground Cover
Strawberry – Nasturtium – Clovers (N)

Vines
Grapes – Winter Hardy Kiwi – Hops

In Swale
Daylilies – Comfrey

Hugelcultured Swale & Linear Food Forest
Perennial trees and plants located along the entire downhill side of the hugelcultured swales
Based on an illustration from *Introductions to Permaculture* by Bill Mollison
Modified by Bill Wilson of Midwest Permaculture

[Click to Return to Gardening Methods](#)

²⁴⁰ Accessed January 4, 2018, <https://poustiniagardenretreat.wordpress.com/hugelkultur/>.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, E. N. *Caring for Place: Ecology, Ideology, and Emotional Traditional Landscape Management*. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press Inc., 2014.
- A Rocha. Accessed February 17, 2018. <https://arocha.us/whatwedo>.
- Athanasius, Robert C. Gregg, trans., ed., *Athanasius: The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1980.
- Aune, D. E. "Apocalypticism," in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, edited by Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.
- Bahnson, Fred and Norman Wirzba. *Making Peace with the Land: God's Call to Reconcile with Creation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012. Kindle.
- Bar-Yosef, Ofer. "On the Nature of Transitions: The Middle to Upper Palaeolithic and the Neolithic Revolution." *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 8, no. 2 (October 1998): 141-163. Accessed October 17, 2017. <https://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/12211496/S0959774300001815a%202.pdf?sequence=2>.
- Barrette, Gene, *Collected Works*, Gary W. Moon and David G. Benner, eds. *Spiritual Direction and the Care of Souls: A Guide to Christian Approaches and Practices*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.
- Bauckham, *Living with Other Creatures: Green Exegesis and Theology*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011. Accessed April 11, 2017. ProQuest Ebrary.
- Benner, David G. *Opening to God: Lectio Divina and Life as Prayer*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010. Kindle.
- Berry, R. J., ed. *The Care of Creation: Focusing Concern and Action*. Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- Boorse, Dorothy. "Creation Care: Religion and Environmental Action." *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 6, no. 3. (2008): 33-37. Accessed January 16, 2017. DOI: 10.1080/15570274.2008.9523351.
- Bouma-Prediger, Steven. *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010.
- Brown, Edward. *Our Father's World: Mobilizing the Church to Care for Creation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008.

- Brown, William P. *The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Brunner, Daniel L., Jennifer L Butler, and A. J. Swoboda. *Introducing Evangelical Ecotheology: Foundations in Scripture, Theology, History, and Praxis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014. Kindle.
- Butler Bass, Diana. *A People's History of Christianity*. New York: HarperOne, 2009. Kindle.
- Carter, Erik C. "The New Monasticism: A Literary Introduction." *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 5, no. 2 (2012): 268-284. Accessed April 20, 2017. *OneFile*, go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?p=AONE&sw=w&u=newb64238&v=2.1&id=GALE%7CA327357692&it=r&asid=aa8abefdde676901f7b0c01f35d1af7a.
- Chrysostomos. "Towards a Spiritual Psychology: The Synthesis of the Desert Fathers." *Pastoral Psychology* 37, no. 4 (Summer 1989): 257.
- Claxton, Rob. *The Way of an anchoress*. 2003. Accessed December 2, 2015. <http://courseweb.stthomas.edu/medieval/julian/anchoress.htm>.
- Clements-Jewery, Philip. *Intercessory Prayer: Modern Theology, Biblical Teaching and Philosophical Thought*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005. Kindle.
- Clough, David. "Beyond Ecotheology." *Theology* 116, no. 1 (2013): 47-49. Accessed December 15, 2017. <http://journals.sagepub.com.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1177/0040571X12461231>.
- Conradie, Ernst M. *Christianity and Ecological Theology: Resources for Further Research*. Stellenbosch, South Africa: SUN PReSS, 2006.
- Conradie, Ernst M., Sigard Bergmann, Celia Deane-Drummond, Denis Edwards, eds. *Christian Faith and the Earth: Current Paths and Emerging Horizons in Ecotheology*. New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014. Kindle.
- Cramer, Benjamin D. and Andrew P. Morris. *Disestablishing Environmentalism*. *Environmental Law* 39, no. 309 (2009).
- Cranfield, C. E. B. "Some Observations on Romans 8:19-21", in *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology*, edited by Robert Banks. Exeter, England: Paternoster, 1974.
- Crowe, Jessica L. "Transforming Environmental Attitudes and Behaviours Through Eco-spirituality and Religion." *International Electronic Journal of Environmental Education* 3, no. 1 (2013): 75-88. Accessed January 16, 2017. <http://dergipark.ulakbim.gov.tr/iejeegreen/article/view/1087000090>.

- Cuddeback, John. "Restoring Land Stewardship through Household Prudence." In *On Earth as It Is in Heaven: Cultivating a Contemporary Theology of Creation*, edited by David Vincent Meconi S.J., 146-158. Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2016.
- Davis, Ellen F. *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Deferrari, Roy J., ed. "St. Athanasius" *The Fathers of the Church: Early Christian Biographies: A New Translation*, 137-138. Baltimore, MD: Catholic University of America Press, 2010. Accessed April 10, 2017. ProQuest Ebrary.
- Delio, Ilia. *Simply Bonaventure: An Introduction to His Life, Thought, and Writings*. Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2001.
- Delio, Ilia, Keith Douglass Warner, Pamela Wood. *Care for Creation: A Franciscan Spirituality of the Earth*. Cincinnati, OH: Franciscan Media, 2016. Kindle.
- deSilva, David A. *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods & Ministry Formation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.
- Doherty, Catherine. *Poustinia: Encountering God in Silence, Solitude and Prayer*. Combermere, Ontario: Madonna House Publications, 2014. Kindle.
- Dunn, James D. G. *Romans 1-8 Vol. 38a Word Biblical Commentary*, edited by Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker. Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1988.
- Elvey, Anne and David Gormely-O'Brien, eds. *Climate Change Cultural Change: Religious Responses and Responsibilities*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013.
- Espelie, Erin. "'Padi' Permaculture." *Natural History* (February 2012): 48. Accessed April 23, 2016.
<http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA283455252&v=2.1&u=newb64238&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&asid=897adee5852afa044063930b1a36341f>. Academic OneFile.
- Evans, Craig A. and Stanley E. Porter, eds. *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.
- Evans, Simon M. and Peter Peller. "Hutterite Colonies and the Cultural Landscape: An Inventory of Selected Site Characteristics." *Journal Of Amish And Plain Anabaptist Studies* 4, no. 1 (2016): 51-81. Accessed April 21, 2017. EBSCOhost.
- Folarin, G.O. "From Primordial Curse to Eschatological Restoration: Ecological Challenges from Genesis 3:14-20 and Romans 8:18-25". *Verbum et Ecclesia: Academic Journal of*

- the Centre for Ministerial Development* 32, no. 1. (September 2011): 7. Accessed December 15, 2017. <http://verbumtecclesia.org.za/index.php/VE/article/view/492>.
- Foster, Richard J. *Freedom of Simplicity: Finding Harmony in a Complex World*. New York: HarperCollins, 2002. Kindle.
- Francis, Pope. *Care for Creation: A Call for Ecological Conversion*, edited by Giuliano Vigini. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016. Kindle.
- Godspace. Accessed February 17, 2018. <http://godspacelight.com/about/>.
- Green, Joel B., Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin, eds. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. 2nd ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013.
- Guenther, Margaret. *Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction*. Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1992.
- Harris, Alexander. "U.S. Self-storage Industry Statistics." *SpareFoot Storage Beat*, October 13, 2017. Accessed December 27, 2017. <https://www.sparefoot.com/self-storage/news/1432-self-storage-industry-statistics/>.
- Harmless, William. "Remembering Poemen Remembering: The Desert Fathers and the Spirituality of Memory." *American Society of Church History* 69, no. 3 (September 2000): 483-518.
- Hessel, Dieter T. and Rosemary Radford Ruether, eds. *Christianity and Ecology: Seeking the Well-Being of Earth and Humans*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Hemenway, Toby. *Gaia's Garden: A Guide to Home-Scale Permaculture*. 2nd ed. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2009.
- Hemenway, Toby. *Redesigning Civilization with Permaculture*, YouTube Video, 1:12:43, January 6, 2013. Accessed November 24, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_y_MleU8iNQ.
- Hiebert, Theodore. "Reclaiming the World: Biblical Resources for the Ecological Crisis." *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 65, no. 4 (October 2011): 341-352. Accessed January 16, 2017. <http://journals.sagepub.com/georgefox.idm.oclc.org/doi/abs/10.1177/002096431106500402>.
- Holden Village. Accessed February 17, 2018. <http://www.holdenvillage.org/about-us/mission-core-values/>.
- Holmgren, David. *Permaculture: Principles & Pathways Beyond Sustainability*. Hepburn, Victoria, Australia: Holmgren Design Services, 2002.

- Holzer, Sepp. *Permaculture: A Practical Guide to Small-Scale, Integrative Farming and Gardening*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2004.
- Hughes-Edwards, Mari. *Religion & Culture in the Middle Ages: Reading Medieval Anchorism: Ideology and Spiritual Practices*. Cardiff, Wales: University of Wales Press, 2012.
- Hunt, Cheryl, David G. Horrell, and Christopher Southgate. "An Environmental Mantra? Ecological Interest in Romans 8:19-23 and a Modest Proposal for its Narrative Interpretation." *Journal of Theological Studies* 59, no. 2 (October 2008): 546-579.
- Irvin, Dale T. and Scott W. Sunkuist. *History of the World Christian Movement: Earliest Christianity to 1453*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2001. Kindle.
- Kaoma, Kapya J., ed. *Creation Care in Cristian Mission*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016.
- Kallhoff, A. "Plants in Ethics: Why Flourishing Deserves Moral Respect". *Environmental Values* 23 no. 6 (2014): 685–700.
- Kaiser, Walter C. *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008.
- Kauffman, Ivan J. *Follow Me: A History of Christian Intentionality*. Cambridge, England: Lutterworth Press, 2009. Accessed April 10, 2017. ProQuest Ebrary.
- Keck, Leander E., Thomas G. Long, David L Peterson, Bruce C. Birch, John J. Collins, Katheryn Pfisterer Darr, William L. Lane, James Earl Massey, Gail R. O'Day, and Marion L. Soards, eds. *The New Interpreter's Bible*. Vol. 8. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995.
- Klink, Edward W. and Darian R. Lockett. *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.
- Lancaster, Brad. *Rainwater Harvesting for Drylands and Beyond*. Vol. 1, 2nd ed. Tucson, AZ: Rainsource Press, 2013.
- Loyola, Ignatius of. *A Pilgrim's Journey: The Autobiography of Ignatius of Loyola*. Revised Edition. Translated by Joseph N. S.J. Tylenda. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2001. Kindle.
- Mannen, Delia, Scott Hinton, Tineke Kuijper, and Todd Porter. "Sustainable Organizing: A Multiparadigm Perspective of Organizational Development and Permaculture Gardening." *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies* 19 no. 3. (August 2012): 355-368. Accessed November 28, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1548051812442967>.

- Markofski, Wes. ed. *New Monasticism and the Transformation of American Evangelicalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. Accessed April 16, 2017. ProQuest Ebrary.
- Merton, Thomas. *No Man Is an Island*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 1955.
- Meconi, David Vincent, S.J., ed. *On Earth as It Is in Heaven: Cultivating a Contemporary Theology of Creation*. Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2016.
- Mizzoni, John. "Franciscan Biocentrism and the Franciscan Tradition." *Ethics & The Environment* 13, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 121-134. Accessed December 12, 2017. <http://web.b.ebscohost.com/geo/fox.idm.oclc.org/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=f21c432e-ffff-4493-b991-8d659d397c78%40sessionmgr103>.
- Moo, Douglas J. *The NIV Application Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.
- Moon, Gary W. and David G. Benner, eds. *Spiritual Direction and the Care of Souls: A Guide to Christian Approaches and Practices*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.
- Mollison, Bill. *Introduction to Permaculture*, 2nd ed. Tasmania, Australia: Tagari Publications, 2011.
- Mollison, Bill. *Permaculture: A Designer's Manual*. Tasmania, Australia: Tagari Publications, 1988.
- Mollison, Bill. *Permaculture Design Course*, DVD-ROM. Tasmania, Australia: Tagari Publications, 2010.
- Mollison, Bill. *Permaculture Two Practical Design for Town and Country in Permanent Agriculture*. Tasmania, Australia: Tagari Publications, 1979.
- "Namaste, Oregon City, OR Retreats." Accessed December 3, 2015. <http://namasteportland.org/wp/spiritual-direction/>.
- Nothwehr, Dawn M. *Ecological Footprints: An Essential Franciscan Guide for Faith and Sustainable Living*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012.
- Norwich, Julian. *Julian of Norwich: Showings (Classics of Western Spirituality)*. Translated by James Walsh. Edited by Richard J Payne. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, Inc., 1978.
- Nouwen Henri J. M. *Spiritual Formation: Following the Movements of the Spirit*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010. Kindle.
- O'Brian, Kevin S.J. *The Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius in Daily Life*. Chicago, IL: Loyola Press, 2011.

- O'Mahony, Anthony. "Tradition at the Heart of Renewal: The Coptic Orthodox Church and Monasticism in Modern Egypt." *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 7, no. 3 (2007): 166. Accessed April 10, 2017. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14742250701535218>.
- Osborn, L. H. "Creation." In *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology: Exploring the Unity and Diversity of Scripture*, edited by Alexander, T. Desmond, Rosner, Brian S., Carson, D.A., and Goldsworthy Graeme, 429-435. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.
- "Palisades Retreat Center." Accessed December 15, 2017. <http://palisadesretreatcenter.org>.
- Peter, Karl A. *The Dynamics of Hutterite Society: An Analytical Approach*. Edmonton, Alberta: The University of Alberta Press, 1987.
- Pierotti, Raymond. *Indigenous Knowledge, Ecology, and Evolutionary Biology*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2010. Accessed April 16, 2017. ProQuest Ebrary.
- Pimentel, David. "Soil Erosion: A Food and Environmental Threat." *Environment, Development and Sustainability* 8 (February 2006): 119–137. Accessed December 12, 2017. <http://dx.doi.org.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/s10668-005-1262-8>. ProQuest Ebrary.
- Plantinga, Cornelius, Jr. *Engaging God's World: A Reformed Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2002.
- Polhill, John B. *Acts* Vol. 26 of *The New American Commentary*, edited by David S. Dockery. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992. Logos.
- Reddy, Sudhakar C. C. S. Jha, V. K. Dadhwal, P. Hari Krishna, S. Vazeed Pasha, K. V. Satish, Kalloli Dutta, K. R. L. Saranya, F. Rakesh, G. Rajashekar, and P. G. Diwakar. "Quantification and Monitoring of Deforestation in India over Eight Decades (1930–2013)." *Biodiversity & Conservation* 25, no. 1 (2016): 93–116. Accessed December 12, 2017. <http://dx.doi.org.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/10.1007/s10531-015-1033-2>. ProQuest.
- Rhodes, Christopher J. "Feeding and Healing the World: Through Regenerative Agriculture and Permaculture." *Science Progress* 95 no. 4 (2012): 378+. Accessed April 23, 2016. <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA320589588&v=2.1&u=newb64238&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&asid=76e1f132e0b322cad5f248f1a9493527>. Academic OneFile.
- Robert, Dana L. "Historical Trends in Missions and Earth Care." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 35, no. 3 (July, 2011): 123. Accessed December 9, 2016. <http://go.galegroup.com.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/ps/i.do?&id=GALE%7CA261080600&v=2.1&u=newb64238&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&authCount=1>.
- Rohr, Richard. *The Eight Core Principles*. Cincinnati, OH: Franciscan Media, 2013. Kindle.

- Sands, Kathleen. "Territory, Wilderness, Property, and Reservation: Land and Religion Native American Supreme Court Cases." *American Indian Law Review*, 36, no. 253 (2011).
- Schmidt Bunkers, Sandra. "The Gifts of Silence and Solitude." *Contributing Editor, Nursing Science Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (January 2008): 22-30. Accessed December 15, 2017. <http://journals.sagepub.com.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.1177/0894318407310756>.
- "Sedona Soul Adventures, Sedona, AZ." Accessed November 27, 2015. <http://sedonasouladventures.com>.
- Sheils, W. J., ed. *Monks, Hermits, and the Ascetic Tradition*. Padstow, England: T. J. Press, 1985.
- Shelley, Bruce L. *Church History in Plain Language*. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995.
- Sider, Ronald J. "Biblical Foundations for Creation Care." In *The Care of Creation: Focusing Concern and Action*, edited by R. J. Berry, 43-49. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2003.
- Sittser, Gerald L. *Water from a Deep Well*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007. Kindle.
- Sorrell, Roger D. *St. Francis of Assisi and Nature: Tradition and Innovation in Western Christian Attitudes Toward the Environment*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Starhawk. *The Earth Path: Grounding Your Spirit in the Rhythms of Nature*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2004.
- Stott, John R. W. *The Radical Disciple: Some Neglected Aspects of Our Calling*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010.
- Stott, John R. W. Forward to *The Care of Creation: Focusing Concern and Action*, edited by R. J. Berry. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2003.
- Sus Sola Corazon, Ulrika K. Stigsdotter, Anne Grete Claudi Jensen, and Kjell Nilsson. "Development of a Nature-Based Concept for Stress Patients at the Danish Healing Forest Garden Nacadia." *Journal of Therapeutic Horticulture* (January 2010): 36-38. Accessed April 9, 2016. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261957702>.
- Sus Sola Corazon, Ulrika K. Stigsdotter, Maja Steen Moeller, Susan Rasmussen, and Susan Moeller. "Nature as Therapist: Integrating Permaculture with Mindfulness- and Acceptance-based Therapy in the Danish Healing Forest Garden Nacadia." *European Journal of Psychotherapy & Counselling* 14, no. 4, 335-347. accessed April 9, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642537.2012.73447>.
- Swan, L. *Forgotten Desert Mothers: Stories and Sayings from the Anonymous Series of the Apophthegmata Patrum*. Oxford, England: Fairacres, 1986.

- Thompson, Augustine. *Francis of Assisi: A New Biography*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012. Accessed January 5, 2018. ProQuest Ebook Central.
- Trebilco, Paul. "Animals." In *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, edited by Walter A. Elwell. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996.
- Troster, Lawrence. "What is Eco-Theology?" *Crosscurrents* (December 2013): 380-385. Accessed April 16, 2017.
[http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1939-3881](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/(ISSN)1939-3881).
- United States Department of Agriculture, *2012 Census of Agriculture: United States Summary and State Data. Vol. 1. Geographic Area Series. Part 51*. AC-12-A-51. Issued May 2014. Table 45. Selected Operation and Operator Characteristics: 2012 and 2007.
- United States Environmental Protection Agency. Accessed December 2, 2016.
<https://www3.epa.gov/watersense/pubs/indoor.html>.
- Vigini, Giuliano. Introduction to *Care for Creation: A Call for Ecological Conversion* by Pope Francis. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016. Kindle.
- Vredenburg, Vance T. and David B. Wake. "Are We in the Midst of the Sixth Mass Extinction? A View from the World of Amphibians." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 105, no. 1 (August 2008). Accessed June 5, 2017. http://www.pnas.org/content/105/Supplement_1/11466.full.pdf.
- Walters, K. *Soul Wilderness: A Desert Spirituality*. New York: Paulist Press, 2001.
- Ware, Kallistos. "The Spirituality of the Icon." In *The Study of Spirituality*, edited by Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainright, and Edward Yarnold, 195-198. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Warners, David, Michael Ryskamp, and Randall Van Dragt. "Reconciliation Ecology: a New Paradigm for Advancing Creation Care." *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 66, no. 4 (December 2014): 221-235. Accessed April 16, 2017.
<http://go.galegroup.com/geo/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA461530151&v=2.1&u=newb64238&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&authCount=1>.
- Warren, Dr. Martin. *Julian of Norwich*. Virtual Medieval Church and Its Writings, University of Saint Thomas. 2003. Accessed December 6, 2015.
<http://courseweb.stthomas.edu/medieval/julian/julian.htm>.
- White, Lynn, Jr. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis." *Science* 155 no. 3767. (March 1967): 1203-1207.

- White, Lynn, Jr. "The Historical Root of Our Ecological Crisis." In *The Care of Creation: Focusing Concern and Action*, edited by R. J. Berry, 31-42. Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- Wilkins, Michael J. *The NIV Application Commentary: From Biblical Text...to Contemporary Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.
- Willard, Dallas. *Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*. New York: HarperCollins e-books, 1998. Kindle.
- Willard, Dallas. "Spiritual Disciplines, Spiritual Formation, and the Restoration of the Soul." *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 26, no. 1 (1998): 101-109.
- Wirzba, Norman. *From Nature to Creation: A Christian Vision for Understanding and Loving Our World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015. Kindle.
- Wolpert, Daniel. *Creating a Life with God: The Call of Ancient Prayer Practices*. Nashville, TN: Upper Room, 2003. Kindle.
- Woodley, Randy S. *Shalom and the Community of Creation: An Indigenous Vision*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012.
- Wright, Christopher J. H. "The Care of Creation, the Gospel and our Mission." *Creation Care in Cristian Mission*, edited by Kapyra J. Kaoma. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016.
- Wright, N. T. "The Letter to the Romans: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections." In *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 10, edited by Leander E. Keck, 395-770. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002.
- Young, Frances. "Wisdom in Weakness." *Theology* 114, no. 3 (May 2011): 181-188. Accessed December 12, 2017. <https://doi-org.georgefox.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/0040571X10395466>.
- 2012 Census of Agriculture: United States Summary and State Data. Vol. 1. Geographic Area Series. Part 51. AC-12-A-51. Issued May 2014. Table 45. Selected Operation and Operator Characteristics: 2012 and 2007.