

How to engage evangelicals in conservation: the implementation of Creation care in Peru



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as creation become the new creation by God's action? This lecture was a report from the frontiers of current research on this problem. An expanded methodology which theology can play a creative role in suggesting new research questions was presented. What was the methodology, research, and the light

environmental issues. He also gave those attending the opportunity to learn more about the Christian faith in general and to see God through his wonders in the creation. Oscar would love to be in contact with any ASA members who visit Peru. Email: ecoteologo@yahoo.com. Web: www.perutrails.com/pajarologo

Ray Bohlin, Executive Director of Ministries with degrees in zoology, genetics and molecular biology. Very insightful commentary on the controversy over evolution. www.ghost ranch.org/

or write: Ghost Ranch Conference Center, HC77, Box 11, Abiquiu, NM 87510 or call (505) 685-4333.

SHARE WITH US WHAT **YOU** or **SOME OTHER ASAer** HAS DONE OR WILL BE DOING! ASAers really care to know!!! Email or write the newsletter co-editors. See our e-mail addresses on page 2.

Inquiring Minds Can Know!!!

Nov/Dec 2002 issue of the Newsletter had an article entitled "Inquiring Minds Can Know." It raises questions that we inter-

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• **Owen Gonzalez**, *Christian History* no. 10 (Fall 2002). The article on The Christian Face of the American Revolution. Owen's article was titled "Did the Reformers Reject Copernicus?" See this interesting article at: www.christianitytoday.com/ch/2002/004/7.22.html



ASAer Oscar Gonzalez is on the right.

• **Oscar Gonzalez** is an ornithologist in Peru who specializes in urban birds (although he has worked in the coast, high Andes, and the rainforest). He is the principal author of a new guide to the birds of Lima and has been a guide in various birdwatcher events. He is involved in many areas where science and faith integrate. Oscar organized a seminar titled "Ecotheology" last fall on ecology and the Christian faith. Articles from *PSCF* were discussed and attendees (biologists, environmental engineers, students, and the general public) were informed about Christianity and its significance to ecological and

very...
• **Edward B. Boyle**, "A Priest Serving in Science," published in *Christian History* no. 10 (Fall 2002). This dealt with how Boyle's career blended faith, doubt, and the use of science to heal disease and fight atheism. <http://ChristianityToday.com/ch/2002/004/9.28.html>

• **Margaret Towne**, *ASA/CSCA Newsletter* editor who teaches Science and Religion at the U. of Nevada, Las Vegas, will be giving a week-long seminar titled "Genesis and Evolution: Integration" on June 2-8, at Ghost Ranch, a Presbyterian Conference Center near Abiquiu, NM. The course is designed for high school and college students, seminarians, parents, public school teachers, college and seminary faculty, school board members, pastors, youth workers, and those in pews across America who always wondered about these issues and who care to understand how God's Word, the Bible, is synchronous with God's work, nature. This is a lovely setting with a paleontology museum on the grounds. See www.ghost ranch.org

only... to inquire... blessing to them... of the questions and answers (all from the New International Version of the Bible) follow.

1. *What is the proper direction for the development of the one, holy, apostolic church in the next century?*
Answer: To continue to carry out the commission Christ gave the apostles in Matt. 28:19-20 ("Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.") and Acts 1:8 ("But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.").

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Doctrine of creation care

- God created man and made him responsible for managing the rest of the creation (the world and its resources).
- Man is not the owner of the creation, but rather the steward who must be accountable for how he has managed the land and its creatures (Genesis 1:26-28, 2:15; Luke 12:41-48, 19:12-27, 20:9-18).
- Biodiversity conservation is one example of this biblically mandated creation care
- The verb translated as “subdue” in Genesis 1:28 *God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."* comes from the Hebrew “shamar” which implies “to keep and care for”. The verb “shamar” is also used in the priest blessing of Numbers 6:24 *The LORD bless you and keep you*

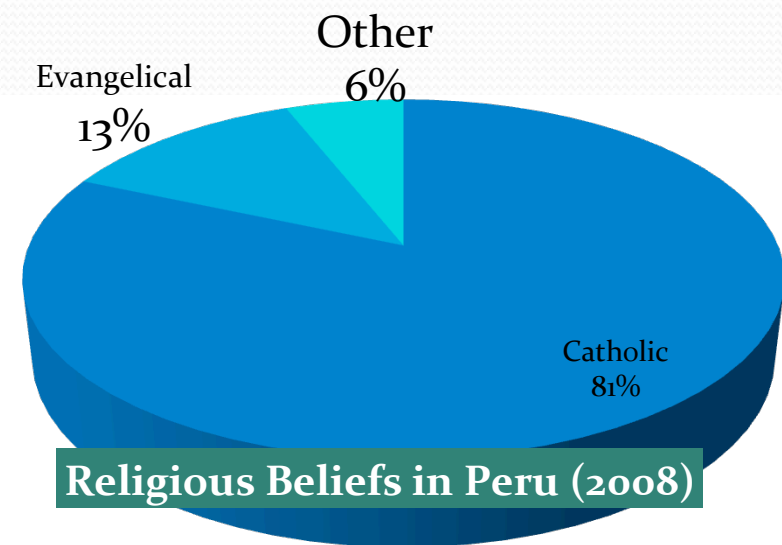
Case application

- Almost all the climates of the world
- Complex geography that comprehends coastal deserts, Andean mountains and Amazon rainforests.
- It is the fifth of fauna richness, with 1840 bird species, 17000 flora species and harbors 13% of the Amazon forests.
- Excellent place to do research and conservation activities



Religious background

- Catholic religion came with the Spaniards in 1532
- Native cults are mixed within catholic traditions or are almost inexistent
- Protestants were denied to preach until 1910
- Today there is freedom of religion and evangelicals are rising exponentially



Threats to biodiversity

- Large history of mining pollution
- High disturbance of the upwelling system of the South Pacific Ocean (El Niño)
- Forest destruction everywhere
- Corruption and abuse in land management against native communities



Illegal logging in the Peruvian rainforest

Is Creation care duable in Peru?

- The increasing local communities demand land; they trespass Protected Areas
- Several of these communities are mainly evangelicals, or with high influence of them
- Conservationists need to approach them to get a common ground

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Birds of the lowland forest of

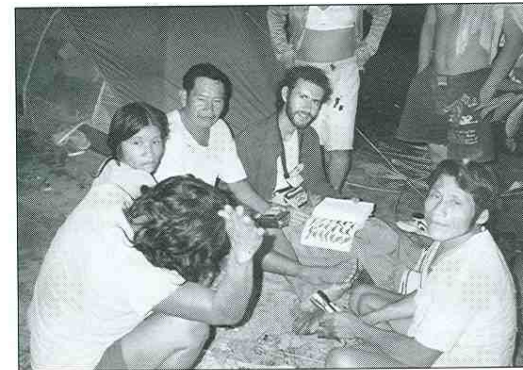


Fig. 1. The author with the best birdwatchers: the asháninka natives.

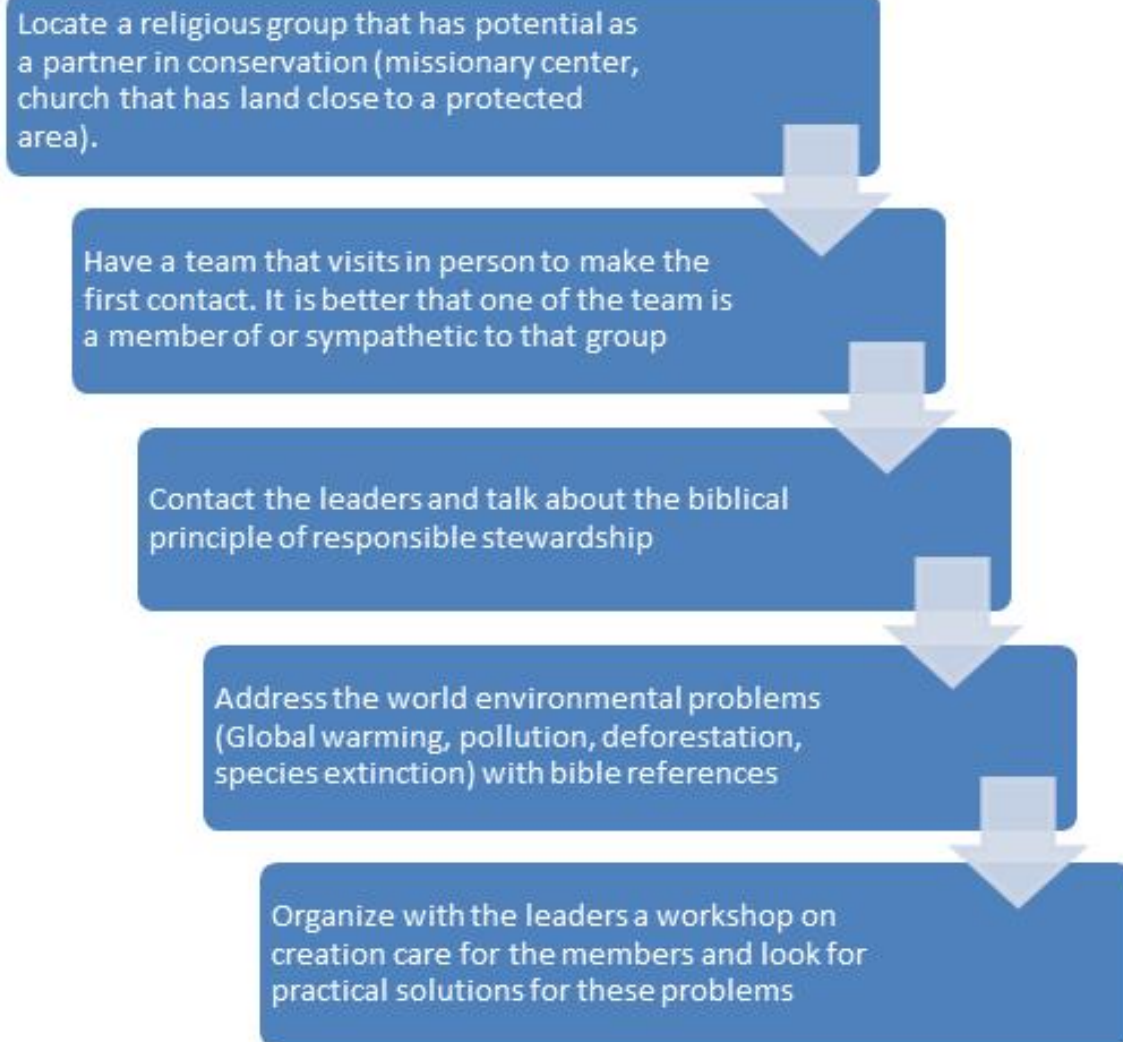
forest (farmland with *Manihot sculenta* and a deforested hill slope) and one in riparian thickets by the Samantoshari river. Near the Cuca lagoon, we set two mist-nets in primary forest and navigated the lagoon in a small canoe to make observations.

Results

A total of 110 species of bird, of 38 families, was identified. They are listed in the Appendix. Forty-one species were mist-netted (c), 47 observed (o)

fronted Lancebill, Hermit *Phaethon*, Sicklebill *Eutoxer*, ably be explained was on the slope there are records de Contamana, *Geotrygon frenata*, *Eutoxeres condan* from lowland areas men data at the Universidad Nacional del Alto Huancayo (UNMSM)). Gravitational vertical movement *frenata* (mean altitudinal movement), *Phaeo* 330 m)—and Ter lowest recorded (1,150 m), *Euto* *Schiffornis turdi* distributional differences were artefacts of movement of the S biogeographical in lowland rainforest to do so.

Process to Approach Christian groups based in Creation care principle





Facing Possible problems

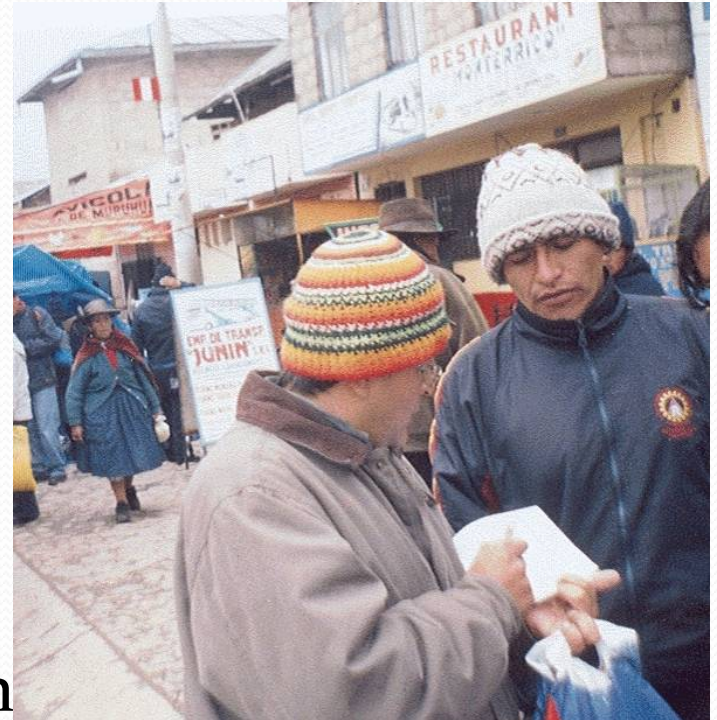
- **Avoid** discussing details of the **dogmatic issues** that might polarize the community. The only principle that is expected to be recognized is the responsible stewardship
- **Do not address the origin of life issue.** It doesn't matter that creationism is promoted in the church, but they should not confuse creation care with creationism
- Be ready to listen **without compromising**
- If you find **opposition, intolerance or corruption**, look for other Christian group

Positive outcomes of the application of Creation care

- Cooperation of evangelical churches with conservation organizations
- Practical local projects to conserve habitats
- Church conservation committee
- Incorporation of nature appreciation in worship services
- Education of children and adults in conservation
- Personal commitment of church members to get involved in conservation activities

Alternatives and opposition to creation care

- Liberation theology
- Prosperity gospel
- “Superspirituality”
- Deep Ecology in Shamanism culture (Land worship: “Pachamama”)
- Prejudices and incredulity within the conservationists



Social survey on the environmental behaviour of local people in the high Andes

Six years preaching creation care in Peru (2004-2009)



*Location of the cities
where the presentations
were made*

Map: "An ecotravellers' guide to Peru"

City and Environment of interest	Churches and / or institutions	Date	People reached (aprox.)	Response
I. Lima Coastal wetlands	Theological Seminary of the Christian and Missionary Alliance	2007	150	New Course in the Seminary: "Ecology and Christianity"
	Lutheran Church "Cristo Rey"	2004	60	Proposal of field trip with children
	Christian and Missionary Alliance	2004	120	Field trip to a protected wetland
	Education College "Diego Thompson"	2005	250	No response
	Faculty of Theology of the Alliance Church	2008	25	No response
	Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church	2007	15	No response
	Light Educational Ministries	2006	0	Presentation denied



City and Environment of interest	Churches and / or institutions	Date	People reached (aprox.)	Response
II. Ica Dry mesquite forest	Iglesia Apostólica Profética de Jesucristo (Guadalupe)	2008	125	70 youth trained to do a reforestation program
	Iglesia Cristo Redentor (Yaurilla)	2008	150	12 youth trained to do a reforestation program
	Iglesia El Aposento Alto (La Venta)	2008	150	15 youth trained to do a reforestation program



Photo: Oliver Whaley. www.huarango.org

City and Environment of interest	Churches and / or institutions	Date	People reached (aprox.)	Response
III. Oxapampa Montane forest	Christian and Missionary Alliance	2007	35	Proposal of field trip with children to Yanachaga National Park



City and Environment of interest	Churches and / or institutions	Date	People reached (aprox.)	Response
IV. Ayacucho High Andean ecosystems	Bible United Society	2009	50	Booklet "Called for caring God's creation"



Photo: Edwin Portal. GAP-Ayacucho

City and Environment of interest	Churches and / or institutions	Date	Pe o p l e reached (aprox.)	Response
V. Tarapoto Montane rainforest	Institute of Natural Resources. Course for park rangers of the Peruvian National Park System	2008	45	Strategy to reach churches that impact in protected land of the Peruvian National Park system.

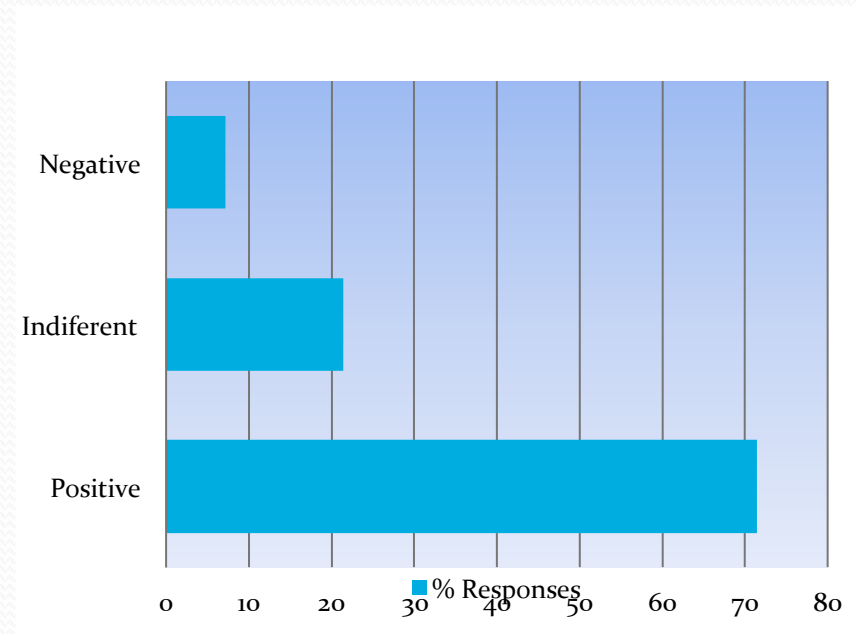


City and Environment of interest	Churches and / or institutions	Date	Pe o p l e reached (aprox.)	Response
VI. Juanjui Lowland rainforest	Christian and Missionary Alliance	2006	40	Youth of the church involved in the conservation program of Rio Abiseo National Park



To conclude

- There is an important potential of cooperation within evangelical groups
- Dialogue is possible using the creation care doctrine
- Peru is a nice place to do research and evangelism. Come and visit!



• 2 Chronicles 7:14

if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

***Aknowledgements:** Members of the Christian and Missionary Alliance and A Rocha Peru who helped to reach our people with the Creation care message.*