Environment

TRUE NORTH: Christ, the Gospel, and Creation Care by Mark Liederbach and Seth Bible. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2012. 173 pages. Paperback; $19.99. ISBN: 9781433676888.

It seems that everywhere we turn, environmental discussions are clouded by fear and hopelessness. These are the driving factors used to motivate action to combat climate change, reduce environmental degradation, and live responsibly. In *True North: Christ, the Gospel, and Creation Care*, Mark Liederbach and Seth Bible aim to reorient the Christian creation care movement by centering our "moral compass" on Christ instead. Their three goals are (1) to ground the creation care discussion in scripture, orthodox doctrine and theology, and biblical reasoning; (2) to construct a Christian framework for discussing environmental ethics; and (3) to illustrate how "biblical and theological teachings about the person of Christ" lead us to a lifestyle of worship which includes honoring him in "the way [we] treat and care for his universe" (pp. 3–4).

Liederbach and Bible accomplish their first purpose well, using scripture, doctrine, and biblical reasoning to argue for Christian creation care. Throughout *True North,* they root every explanation or argument in a biblical text. This scripture-based approach centers their argument on "serving God" instead of "saving the planet." They use a variety of Old and New Testament texts and consider verses within the context of the surrounding passages, making their biblical analysis robust and rounded. The authors do very little of their own exegesis; they rely on the work of a variety of theologians when analyzing a passage. Employing plausible and well-explained interpretations, they summarize and demonstrate how biblical texts form our understanding of creation care. Their critique of interpretations is logical, scripture-based, and respectful to other authors. Doctrine also supports their arguments. For example, Christ's full humanity and bodily resurrection are discussed at length to affirm the goodness of the physical world and to support our need to protect it. Overall, Liederbach and Bible's approach is easy to follow, logical, and biblically grounded, giving the reader a persuasive, focused, specifically Christian argument for creation care.

Developing a Christian framework for engaging creation care is the authors' weakest point. In a sense, the framework for Christian environmental ethics has already been established by multiple other authors, and *True North* mainly summarizes the recent literature; however, Liederbach and Bible's Christocentric perspective, rather than the human or Earth-centered arguments found even in some Christian environmental literature, adds to creation-care theology and enhances the "framework." The authors also clearly state why the incarnation affirms creation care. "Creating" the framework is stretching what the authors believe they have done, but "enhancing" or "clarifying" the current framework to focus on Christ, worship, and obedience is certainly true.

The greatest achievement of Liederbach and Bible is the way in which they address their third purpose. Their entire book focuses intensely on Christology and how understanding who Christ is and how he works should shape our understanding of creation care. Chapter 1 orients the reader toward Christ as *True North* and the center of our worldview. The authors capably critique and redirect the "crisis mentality" espoused in secular environmentalism and the "disembodied doctrine" of Christians who try to separate evangelism from creation care, arguing for a holistic, worshipful perspective that places Christ above crisis and unites preaching with action in gospel witness. Chapters 2 and 3 establish Christ as Creator, the inherent value and purpose he gives creation, and humanity's unique position as image bearers in the created order. Liederbach and Bible illustrate that because Christ creates, owns, and values his creation and calls us to imitate, worship, and obey him above all else, caring for creation becomes part of a fulfilling human existence. In chapter 4, the authors explore the importance of Christ's redemptive work on how we approach creation care. They address the Fall's effect on creation and explain the importance of Christ's death and resurrection in affirming the goodness of the created order, realigning humanity to God's example of headship, and imbuing all of creation with the hope of restoration. In light of that hope, chapter 5 addresses eschatology and the fate of creation when Christ returns. The authors reject the interpretation of 2 Peter 3:10 that insists the world will be destroyed by fire, arguing that scripture instead affirms its continuity in the end times. The final chapter asks the question: "How, then, shall we live?" Liederbach and Bible conclude that we, as God's people, must recognize the value Christ has given his creation and live as creative stewards—caring, investigating, enjoying, and enlarging creation (p. 156).

True North is well written, well organized, and easy to understand. I have a few criticisms. First, the writing can be wordy. Some chapter introductions and the gospel presentation seemed too long. Second, the

authors clearly state their focus on Christ, but in light of their desire to build a Christian framework for discussing creation care, I felt a conspicuous inattention to the roles of the Father and Holy Spirit. Finally, the main goal of this book was the Christ-centered perspective on creation care. The first two purposes the authors listed, while central to the aim of the book, support this main goal rather than stand on their own.

I recommend this book for anyone seeking a Christ-centered perspective on environmental ethics, especially for students in theology or environmental biology. Because the authors avoid jargon and clearly explain concepts and terminology, the book is easily accessible to people of multiple backgrounds. On a personal note, I deeply appreciated the earnest, rich message conveyed by the authors. In a culture driven by fear of environmental change and a tradition sometimes marked by ignorance and neglect for creation care, Liederbach and Bible make an excellent case for creation care filled with worship, hope, and Christ as part of a fulfilling lifestyle and holistic gospel witness.

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ETHICS

COVENANTAL BIOMEDICAL ETHICS FOR CONTEMPORARY MEDICINE: An Alternative to Principles-Based Ethics by James J. Rusthoven. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014. 314 + xv pages, including bibliography and index. Hardcover; $36.00. ISBN: 9781625640024.

In the early 1980s, Mayo Medical School asked me to help set up and teach a newly required course in medical ethics. The faculty overseeing the course—physicians all—did not feel qualified to teach the course, but they definitely had already chosen the textbook—*Principles of Biomedical Ethics*—which was also the name of the course. I was comfortable with using it, but I wondered how they chose the textbook. "Because the title conveys that there are accepted principles of medical ethics just as in the sciences, and our students need to see that," they said. The book by Tom Beauchamp and James Childress, then going into its 2nd edition, has now reached its 7th edition (Oxford University Press, 2012) and has become the most widely used text in medical ethics courses as well as in the many workshops offered to medical professionals.

James Rusthoven would like to pour a little water on this flame. As his subtitle indicates, he advocates for a covenantal ethics that he thinks is truer to the practice of medicine and better for nurturing medical practitioners because it is rooted in the transcendent God and God's revelation and not merely in what he sees as a baseless and minimalist common-denominator morality. His book is an impressive achievement. Rusthoven is a medical oncologist with a part-time clinical practice, and he is also a professor at McMaster University. Some time ago he decided to pursue his interest in ethics by enrolling at the University of Toronto Joint Centre for Bioethics; this book is a version of his PhD thesis.

Part One (four chapters) discusses the rise and dominance of principles-based biomedical ethics (usually called "principlism"). The author refers to most of the heavy thinkers in the debates since the late 1970s, and discusses the adequacy of Beauchamp and Childress's "common morality" approach, which located four principles that can serve as agreed-on considerations relevant to most biomedical debates—autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, and justice. Utilitarians, Kantians, and natural law theorists will have different ways of justifying these, but they—and anyone using common sense—can converge on them as middle-level principles applicable to particular ethical decisions. Of course, these principles have to be specified when applied, and also balanced and prioritized when not all of them can be satisfied to the same degree in a given case; the devil is in these details.

I served on an ethics committee at our local hospital for a number of years, and these four principles were laid out as the framework for our decision making (introduced as "the accepted principles for medical ethics"). Often the committee could reach agreement on what to do in a given case, though it was not always clear how members linked their decisions to the principles. Most of the disagreements were actually over empirical issues such as whether the patient was competent and what would happen if a given decision or policy were implemented, but when the disagreement was normative, it was often over such matters as whether the patient's decision should be honored even if did not seem to be in his or her best interest. This, of course, is a difference over how to rank autonomy and beneficence, and Rusthoven is right in noting that there is no overarching principle to help decide.

That American individualism, as well as its legal system, promotes autonomy as the trump card is hardly a moral justification. Rusthoven covers quite comprehensively and perceptively the secular debate over the usefulness of the principles approach. Soon