a document written in 2021 by the heads of the Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Anglican churches.

Bouma-Prediger gives a practical guide in chapter 5 to describe what to do in our earthkeeping ministry. We should start with reflections on scripture and rescuing Christian tradition in our relationship with the natural world. Living simply is a virtue to cherish, and avoiding overconsumption minimizes severe damage to the environment. "Remember that you have never seen a hearse with a luggage rack" (p. 137) is a phrase that admonishes us not to be greedy with the environment. The disconnection of humans with nature is regarded as "ecological homelessness," which should be counteracted by developing the virtue of caring for creation.

In the author's discussion of environmental justice and environmental racism, he points out that the consequences of pollution and resource depletion are suffered unequally by specific human communities. To be aware of these injustices, we should educate ourselves on how to manage the earth wisely and not abuse its resources. In this way, we will develop ecological consciousness. This section finishes with several ways we can practice earthkeeping as individuals and as a community, after we have learned how to practice gratitude, generosity, and the sabbath rest.

The last chapter presents a biblical statement of shalom: "It is not just about reconciliation between people or reconciliation between humans and God. It is about flourishing of all the earth" (p. 187), where God's creatures, including plants and animals, praise the Lord.

An important omission from this book that is essential to understanding the value of creation care was Lynn White Jr.'s criticism of Christian theology as an exploiter of nature in his influential article "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis."[1] Some may argue that much of the "greening" of theology was a response to this article, which corrected a misunderstanding of "dominion" and the stewardship mandate in scripture.

Bouma-Prediger's assertion that the afterlife will be "earthy" may not be acceptable to some evangelical groups. If we do not go to heaven and heaven comes to us, then the "left behind" theology is wrong, requiring us to value this earth and not consider it disposable. "An escapist eschatology implies an ethics of neglect and exploitation" (p. 69).

The author's endorsement of positions considered by many as extreme will also be controversial. For example, he quotes the environmental activist and writer Wendell Berry several times, once saying that the destruction of nature is "the worst horrid blasphemy" (p. 39). Most Christians would probably take issue with that statement. He also quotes the African American theologian James Cone, who accuses conservationists of being racists if they do not fight against white supremacy. Environmental racism is a possible root of injustice and nature destruction in some cases but conflating it with white supremacy does not help the Christian cause.

These controversial topics do not diminish the book's value as an excellent pastoral and academic resource for Christians and anyone interested in conserving nature. Bouma-Prediger is highly qualified to teach us about creation care and the different ways to engage in earthkeeping. His masterful biblical exegesis is persuasive in making the case that the environment should matter to Christians regardless of their political perspectives. I highly recommend this book.

Note

[1]Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155, no. 3767 (1967): 1203–7, https://archive.org/details/HistoricalRootsOfEcologicalCrisisV.

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RECONCILIATION IN A MICHIGAN WATERSHED: Restoring Ken-O-Sha by Gail Gunst Heffner and David P. Warners. Michigan State University Press, 2024. 314 pages. Paperback; $29.95. ISBN: 9781611864939.

I am certain, because it piqued my anxious imagination, that I first heard the phrase "reconciliation ecology" from my friend Dave Warners (coauthor). It's at least partly an allusion to the phrase "restoration ecology," which was by then recognized as a subspecialty of applied ecology, even having its own academic journal. Its goal is scientific support for restoring biodiversity and ecosystem function. The problem with restoration ecology is that, while populated with dedicated researchers and practitioners, it struggles with making its case in the wider North American culture.

This new book by Heffner and Warners addresses that issue and is an absolute joy for the hopeful direction it offers. My review copy is well marked up and, having read it twice, I can report that it gets richer on second pass. It too is about restoring biodiversity and ecosystem function, but it probes deeper into human worldviews and their effects on both degradation and restoration.

Plaster Creek (Grand Rapids, MI) is the "Ken-O-Sha" in the title. That Heffner and Warner choose to use the Ottawa name (translation, "Water of the Walleye") presages their centering of human history and cultural significance in its Indigenous roots. It also recognizes that the human-nature connection and relationship, which is associated with Indigenous worldviews, offers an alternative to the rigorous commodification and conquest attitudes of white settlers and, regrettably, most of their descendants.

The book is ostensibly an expansive report on the authors' efforts (with volunteers, students, and community members) to restore a degraded urban stream to

better ecological health. It carefully examines the historic, cultural, ecological, and human contexts that led to the stream's degradation and how their team, Plaster Creek Stewards (PCS), navigates those contexts to restore the human-nature connections to enable the stream to recover.

Key to the restoration story has been the co-founding of the PCS group by Heffner and Warners. This group is an affiliation of watershed stakeholders, students, and volunteers who provide a collective energy and (literal) muscle for the restoration work.

Reconciliation in a Michigan Watershed is well written and good to read. It has thirteen chapters organized into three thematic sections: (1) recognizing the problem, (2) acknowledging our (settlers and descendants) complicity, and (3) committing to restoration. The treatment is rigorous in an academic sense with liberal (though unobtrusive) use of footnotes that link to a reasonably extensive bibliography spanning literature and poetry, news sources, and scientific journals. There is a table of contents and an index of topics to aid in orientation.

Reconciliation … draws from scholarship in a wide variety of disciplines including geology, human history, ecology, sociology, policy, and even faith traditions. Indeed, this could have been simply a successful academic book, making all the interdisciplinary linkages by first explaining the degradation of Ken-O-Sha and then supporting its movement toward restoration within a philosophical frame of reconciliation.

The book is all that for certain, but what sets it apart is the truly tactile blending of personal stories (not only of the authors but also of volunteers and watershed residents) and a clear sense that the authors invested themselves in the restoration work and the people connected to it. There are stories of their apprehension and missteps in public engagement, of discovery or rediscovery of ecological richness and relic rare species, of a living memory of the good and bad. You read this and you know something intimate about the creek, something that can emerge only because the authors write from firsthand experience—mucking about, both literally and metaphorically, in the socio-ecological realities—and from an unspoken but clear love of the place.

I think this is a singularly important book. The term "reconciliation ecology" traces back to one of those interesting thought pieces found in academia. The sort of thing that one reads and maybe offers up as a discussion topic in a student seminar in which we sort through abstractions in a self-satisfying way. This, though, is an example of the idea put into emerging successful practice with all the granular detail about wins and losses, where the dirt under one's fingernails (again, real and metaphorical) is hard won.

Reconciliation …, the book and the idea, is a next step in the authors' scholarship in re-considering the stewardship paradigm for Christian creation-care discipleship. Both authors were contributors to *Beyond Stewardship* (Calvin University Press, 2019), in which an interdisciplinary group of Christian scholars assembled to consider moving beyond the transactional/detached nature of the common stewardship paradigm (God wants me to care for creation so I must care for it) to a paradigm of interrelationship and communion between Creator and creation. It is easy to see the intellectual and spiritual connections between both books and how the authors' experience with PCS grounded their thinking.

It is telling and a little damning that Plaster Creek became "west Michigan's most contaminated waterway" in the very backyard of Calvin University, an institution that rightfully prides itself on rigorous Christian scholarship located in a city (Grand Rapids) closely identified with robust Reformed and Calvinist traditions. It speaks to a blind spot in expression of Christian faith and, likely, a pathology in worldview. Gail Gunst Heffner and David P. Warners make a wise and accurate diagnosis and offer the most promising treatment that I am aware of: reconnection.

It is a wise book and an important book. Highly recommended.

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HOPE FOR GOD'S CREATION: Stewardship in an Age of Futility by Andrew J. Spencer. B&H Academic, 2023. 240 pages including indices. Paperback; $24.99. ISBN: 9781087751474.

Andrew Spencer, who blogs at ethicsandculture.com, has a PhD in theological studies, serves as a supervisor of operations training at a nuclear power plant, and is a senior research fellow for the Institute of Faith, Work, and Economics. His 2023 book *Hope for God's Creation* takes on a difficult task: defining and expanding a Christian environmental ethic based on orthodox, theologically conservative doctrine. Creation should be stewarded with hope even though we are currently in an age when it is subject to futility (Rom. 8:19–21). Overall, Spencer offers a strong theological basis for creation care to an American evangelical readership.

The book considers four major doctrines: Revelation, Creation, Anthropology, and Eschatology. In "Part I: The Background of Creation Care," Spencer describes reasons for creation care, dangers of "environmental entanglement," and a history of humanity and the environment. Christians need to transpose doctrine to action, applying the theocentric approach of ancient Christianity to modern questions, because ethics should flow from theology rather than the other way around. Spencer repeatedly warns that it is dangerous to entangle Christian belief with environmentalism: the fusion could result in pantheism,