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, was the new research question, in which Owen was presented. Was the Reformation a religious movement that obscured scientific advancement? Was the Reformation a scientific revolution that obscured religious questions? Owen’s article was thus titled “Did the Reformers Reject Copernicus?” See this interesting article at www.christianitytoday.com/ch/2002/004/7.22.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.ghostranch.org or write: Ghost Ranch Conference Center, HC77, Box 11, Abiquiu, NM 87510 or call (505) 685-4533.

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!!

The Mar/Apr 2003 issue of the Newsletter contained an article entitled “Inquiring Minds Can Know.” It addresses questions that many of us have asked ourselves. What is the meaning of life? What is the purpose of the universe? What is the meaning of God? What is the meaning of our existence? These are just a few of the questions that are addressed in the article.

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.”).
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 exponentialy
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
Is Creation care durable 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
Process to Approach Christian groups based in Creation care principle

1. Locate a religious group that has potential as a partner in conservation (missionary center, church that has land close to a protected area).

2. Have a team that visits in person to make the first contact. It is better that one of the team is a member of or sympathetic to that group.

3. Contact the leaders and talk about the biblical principle of responsible stewardship.

4. Address the world environmental problems (Global warming, pollution, deforestation, species extinction) with bible references.

5. Organize with the leaders a workshop on creation care for the members and look for practical solutions for these problems.
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”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City and Environment of interest</th>
<th>Churches and / or institutions</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>People reached (aprox.)</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| I. Lima  
<p>|                                 | 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                                                     |</p>
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<th>Response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II. Ica Dry mesquite forest</td>
<td>Iglesia Apostólica Profética de Jesucristo (Guadalupe)</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>70 youth trained to do a reforestation program</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iglesia Cristo Redentor (Yaurilla)</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>12 youth trained to do a reforestation program</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iglesia El Aposento Alto (La Venta)</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>15 youth trained to do a reforestation program</td>
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Photo: Oliver Whaley. www.huarango.org
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<th>People reached (aprox.)</th>
<th>Response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III. Oxapampa Montane forest</td>
<td>Christian and Missionary Alliance</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Proposal of field trip with children to Yanachaga National Park</td>
</tr>
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<td>Churches and / or institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>IV. Ayacucho</td>
<td>Bible United Society</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Booklet “Called for caring God’s creation”</td>
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</tbody>
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High Andean ecosystems

Photo: Edwin Portal. GAP-Ayacucho
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<tr>
<td>V. Tarapoto Montane rainforest</td>
<td>Institute of Natural Resources. Course for park rangers of the Peruvian National Park System</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Strategy to reach churches that impact in protected land of the Peruvian National Park system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>VI. Juanjui Lowland rainforest</td>
<td>Christian and Missionary Alliance</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Youth of the church involved in the conservation program of Rio Abiseo National Park</td>
</tr>
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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.