

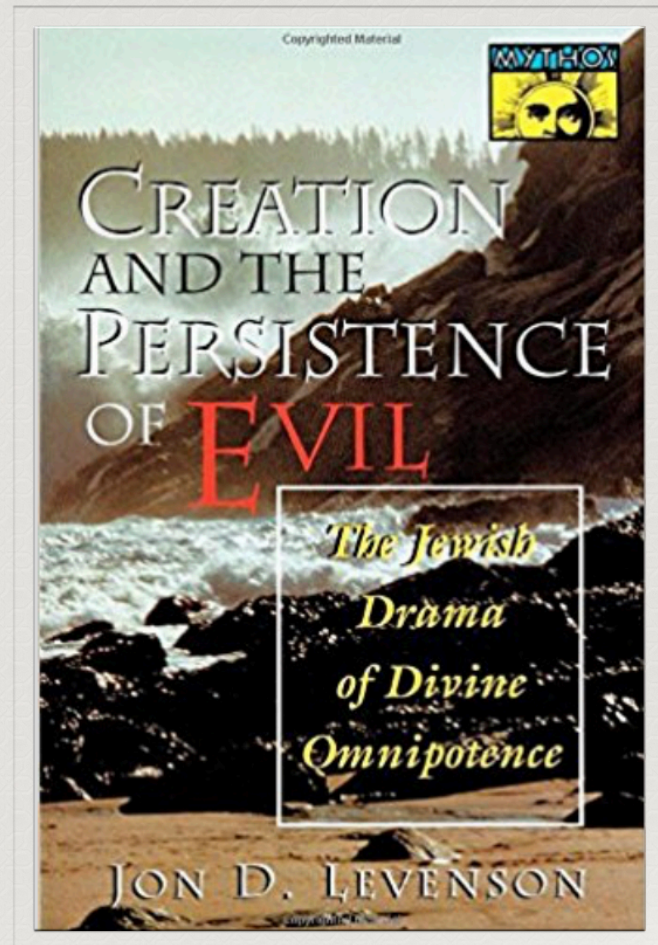
Pastor's Class

July 5, 2020

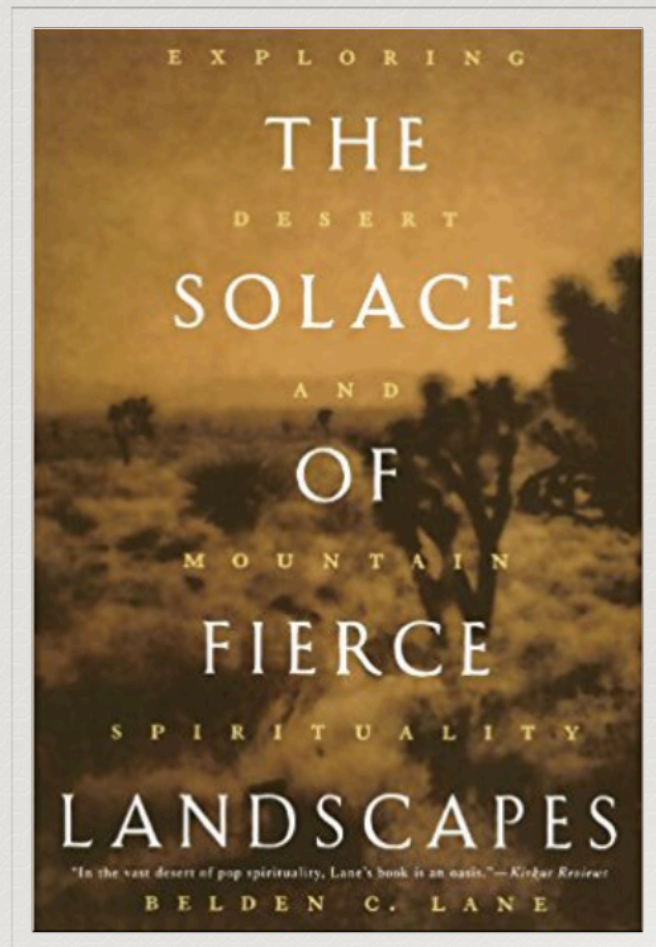
Eco-theology

Resources that Helped me . . .

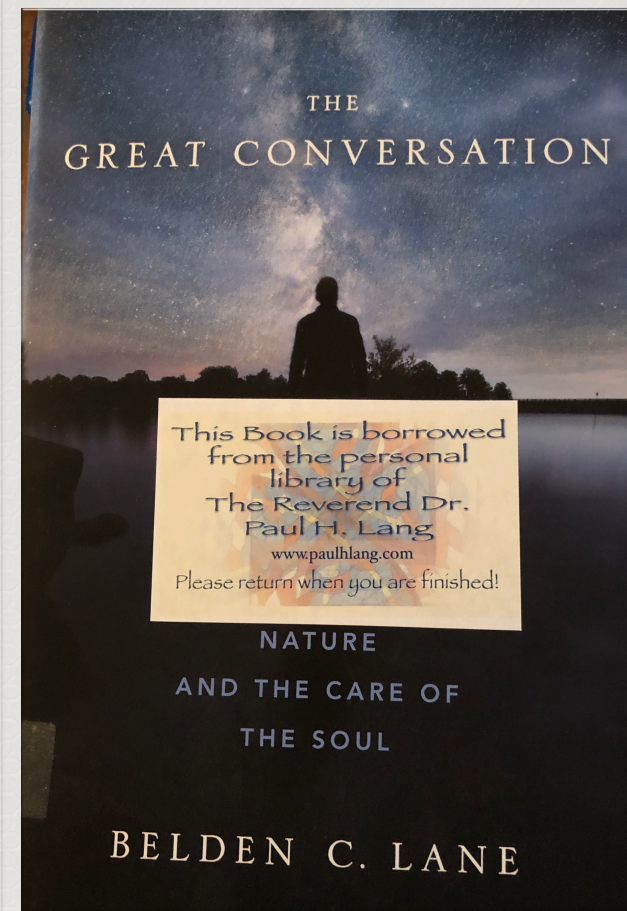
Jon Levenson



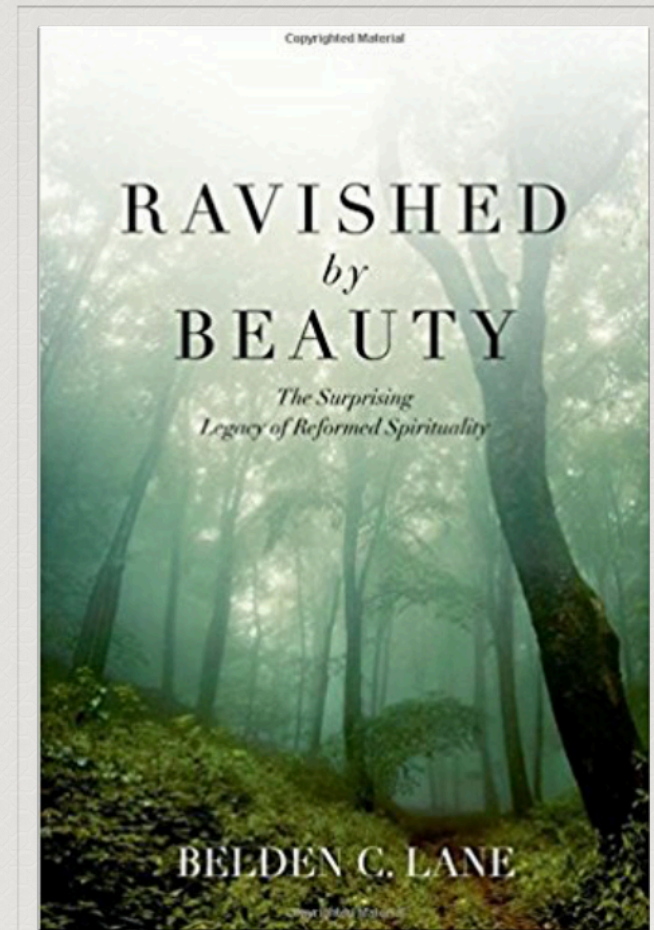
Belden Lane



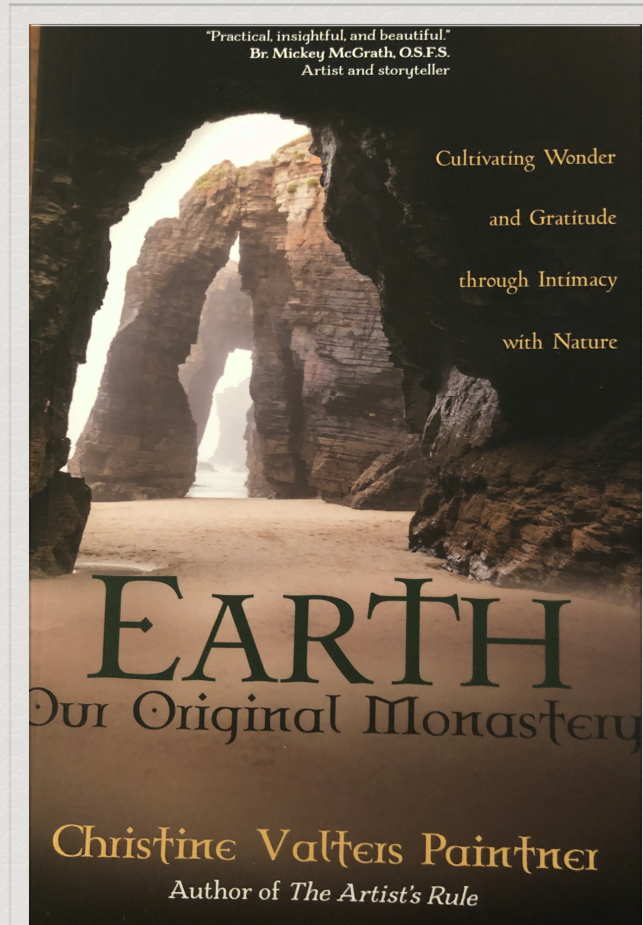
Belden Lane



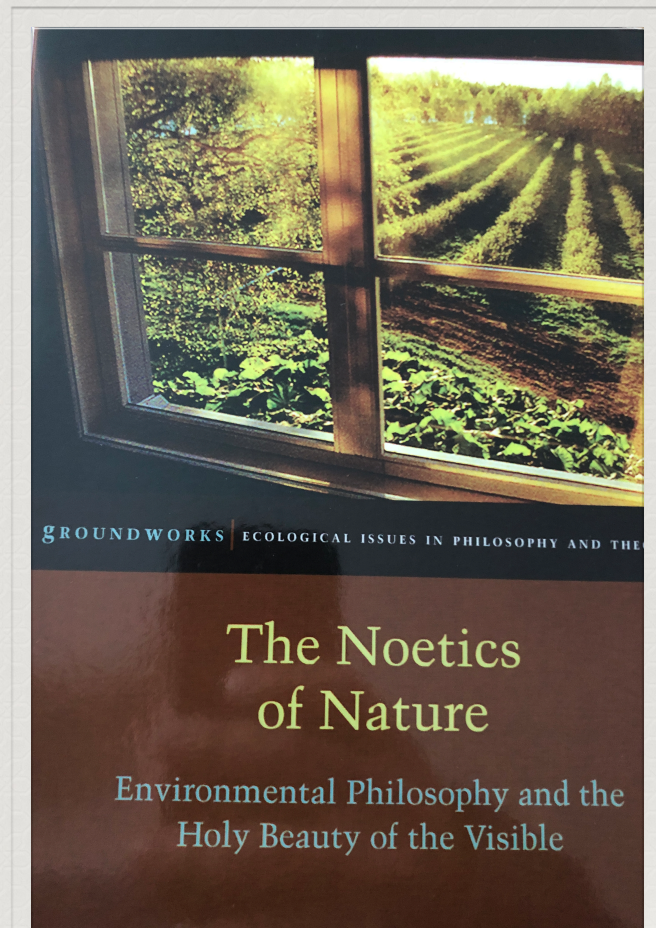
Belden Lane



Christine Valters Paintner



A denser read...





The Beauty of Creation

As an invitation to see/find/know God...

A few quotes from *Ravished by Beauty*

“God is beautiful. Beautiful...as a fact and as a force in the manner in which he asserts himself as the one who arouses pleasure, creates desire for himself, and rewards with delight..., the one who as God is both lovely and love-worthy.”

— Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, II/1 (1970)

“In a vision...I beheld and comprehended the whole creation, that is, what is on this side and what is beyond the sea, the abyss, the sea itself, and everything else....And my soul in an excess of wonder cried out: ‘This world is pregnant with God!’”

— Angela of Foligno, *Book of Visions and Instructions* (thirteenth century).













Creation

A Few Biblical Texts...

Psalm 19:1-4

Psa. 19:0 To the leader. A Psalm of David.

- 1 The heavens are telling the glory of God;
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.*
- 2 Day to day pours forth speech,
and night to night declares knowledge.*
- 3 There is no speech, nor are there words;
their voice is not heard;*
- 4 yet their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.*

Psalm 24:1-2

- 1 *The earth is the LORD'S and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it;*
- 2 *for he has founded it on the seas,
and established it on the rivers.*

Psalm 104 — A Creation Psalm

*Psa. 104:27 These all look to you
to give them their food in due
season;*

*28 when you give to them, they
gather it up;*

*when you open your hand,
they are filled with good things.*

*29 When you hide your face, they are
dismayed;*

*when you take away their
breath, they die
and return to their dust.*

*30 When you send forth your spirit,
they are created;
and you renew the face of the
ground.*



Creation Groans in Travail

Photo - National Geographic

“I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; 20 for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; 23 and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.”

Romans Chapter 8:18-25

Creation - *ex nihilo*

- ✿ *This idea, dominant since 4th century in West, has profoundly impacted our attitude about creation.*
- ✿ *Creation - seen as apart from God (out of nothing) and unlike us -has become an object which we dominate, subdue, and exploit.*



Hubble - Telescope creative commons

Creation - as a fellow *person/partner*

- ✿ *What if* we could re-read our bibles with a view to seeing how often creation is...?
- ✿ God's partner in establishing a fruitful universe.
- ✿ Our partner in preserving a workable /sustainable world.



Creation Personified

- ✿ *“waits with eager longing...” Romans 8*
- ✿ *“We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now;”*
- ✿ *“Because of this the earth shall mourn,” Jeremiah 4 (and other prophets)*
- ✿ *“Listen; your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground! 11 And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand.” Genesis 4:10-ff*

Creation Personified

- *Gen. 1:20 And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” 21 So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. 22 God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” 23 And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.*

Creation Personified

- ✿ *28 God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” 29 God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.”*

Creation Personified

- ✦ *Gen. 9:8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 9 “As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, 10 and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. 11 I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” 12 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:*

Creation Personified

✿ *Jonah 4:9 But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?” And he said, “Yes, angry enough to die.” 10 Then the Lord said, “You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. 11 And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?”*

Creation Groans in Travail

The Consequence of Our Flawed Theology & Our Apostasy



Photos - National Geographic

We Sin — Creation Suffers

✿ *Lev. 26:3 If you follow my statutes and keep my commandments and observe them faithfully, 4 I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. 5 Your threshing shall overtake the vintage, and the vintage shall overtake the sowing; you shall eat your bread to the full, and live securely in your land. 6 And I will grant peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and no one shall make you afraid; I will remove dangerous animals from the land, and no sword shall go through your land. 7 You shall give chase to your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. 8 Five of you shall give chase to a hundred, and a hundred of you shall give chase to ten thousand; your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. 9 I will look with favor upon you and make you fruitful and multiply you; and I will maintain my covenant with you. 10 You shall eat old grain long stored, and you shall have to clear out the old to make way for the new. 11 I will place my dwelling in your midst, and I shall not abhor you. 12 And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people.*

We Sin — Creation Suffers

- ✿ *Lev. 26:14 But if you will not obey me, and do not observe all these commandments, 15 if you spurn my statutes, and abhor my ordinances, so that you will not observe all my commandments, and you break my covenant, 16 I in turn will do this to you: I will bring terror on you; consumption and fever that waste the eyes and cause life to pine away. ... 20 Your strength shall be spent to no purpose: your land shall not yield its produce, and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit.*

We Sin — Creation Suffers

Is. 24:4 *The earth dries up and withers,
the world languishes and withers;
the heavens languish together with the
earth.*

5 *The earth lies polluted
under its inhabitants;
for they have transgressed laws,*

*violated the statutes,
broken the everlasting covenant.*

6 *Therefore a curse devours the earth,
and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt;
therefore the inhabitants of the earth
dwindled,
and few people are left.*

We Sin — Creation Suffers

Jer. 14:1 The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah concerning the drought:

2 *Judah mourns*

and her gates languish;

they lie in gloom on the ground,

and the cry of Jerusalem goes up.

3 *Her nobles send their servants for water;*

they come to the cisterns,

they find no water,

they return with their vessels empty.

They are ashamed and dismayed

and cover their heads,

4 *because the ground is cracked.*

Because there has been no rain on the land

the farmers are dismayed;

they cover their heads.

5 *Even the doe in the field forsakes her newborn fawn*

because there is no grass.

6 *The wild asses stand on the bare heights,*

they pant for air like jackals;

their eyes fail

because there is no herbage.



Week Two

We Sin — Creation Suffers

*Hos. 4:1 Hear the word of the LORD, O
people of Israel;*

*for the LORD has an indictment against
the inhabitants of the land.*

There is no faithfulness or loyalty,

and no knowledge of God in the land.

2 Swearing, lying, and murder,

and stealing and adultery break out;

bloodshed follows bloodshed.

3 Therefore the land mourns,

and all who live in it languish;

together with the wild animals

and the birds of the air,

even the fish of the sea are perishing.

Reconciliation, Walt Whitman

WORD over all, beautiful as the sky!

Beautiful that war, and all its deeds of carnage, must in time be utterly lost;

That the hands of the sisters Death and Night, incessantly softly wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world:

Reconciliation, Walt Whitman

WORD over all, beautiful as the sky!

Beautiful that war, and all its deeds of carnage, must in time be utterly lost;

That the hands of the sisters Death and Night, incessantly softly wash again, and ever again, this soil'd world:

... For my enemy is dead—a man divine as myself is dead;

I look where he lies, white-faced and still, in the coffin—I draw near;

I bend down, and touch lightly with my lips the white face in the coffin.



Creation *ex nihilo*

- ✿ *While the biblical witness allows for this possibility . . . it rarely (only once in the apocryphal literature) says this overtly. Second Maccabees 7:28 —*
- ✿ *“I beg you, my child, to look at the heaven and the earth and see everything that is in them, and recognize that God did not make them out of things that existed.”*
- ✿ *All other texts are disinterested in this philosophical question or are agnostic.*

Creation *ex nihilo*

✦ *Rom. 4:13 For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. 14 If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. 15 For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. 16 For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, 17 as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”)—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.*

Creation *ex nihilo*

- ✿ *A student of the theme of creation in the Old Testament must inevitably face the issue of whether the Old Testament claims creation *ex nihilo*: Did God create out of nothing? It is correct, as it is conventional, to say that there is no unambiguous evidence for such a claim before 2 Maccabees, which is very late indeed in the faith of Israel. Other texts, perhaps even Gen 1:1–2, permit but do not require such a reading. The large claims made for Yahweh would admit of such a radical claim of sovereignty, but Israel seems not to have said it so, nor to have conceptualized it so. And if not *ex nihilo*, then we are bound to conclude that Israel understood Yahweh's activity of creation to be one of forming, shaping, governing, ordering, and sustaining a created world out of the "stuff of chaos," which was already there. Unlike some speculative traditions, Israel evidences no interest or curiosity about the origin of the "stuff of creation." It is simply there as a given, which Yahweh then addresses in lordly fashion. — Taken from Brueggemann's Old Testament Theology, Chapter Four.*

Tilling & Keeping

✿ *Gen. 2:15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.*

Tilling & Keeping

- ✿ *"Tilling" symbolizes everything we humans do to draw sustenance from nature. It requires individuals to form communities of cooperation and to establish systematic arrangements (economies) for satisfying their needs. Tilling includes not only agriculture but mining and manufacturing and exchanging, all of which depend necessarily on taking and using the stuff of God's creation. — from Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice, Part I.*

Tilling & Keeping

- ✿ *"Keeping" the creation means tilling with care—maintaining the capacity of the creation to provide the sustenance for which the tilling is done. This, we now have come to understand, means making sure that the world of nature may flourish, with all its intricate, interacting systems upon which life depends. — from Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice, Part I.*

Three Reasons Tilling & Keeping matter

- ✿ 1. *the twofold reason for human beings to care about the natural world: their own constant, unavoidable dependence on it, and nature's own intrinsic value;*
- ✿ 2. *the close connection of ecology and economics, so that, properly understood, they are inseparable;*
- ✿ 3. *the global crisis that entails both the degradation of nature and the inequities within human societies (most particularly, the inequities of access to nature's sustenance).*

—*from* Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice, Part I.

Global Warming cited in 1990

- ✿ *“Only in the past few years has global warming come widely to the fore of environmental consciousness. Reports of recent studies suggest that it is the gravest threat of all. If not addressed, it could overwhelm all other efforts to deal with environmental and social issues.”*

— *from Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice, Part I.*

202nd General Assembly (1990)

- ✿ *Responding theologically and ethically to the endangered planet, we, the 202nd General Assembly (1990), find powerful reasons for engagement in restoring God's creation:*
- ✿ *—God's works in creation are too wonderful, too ancient, too beautiful, too good to be desecrated.*
- ✿ *—Restoring creation is God's own work in our time, in which God comes both to judge and to restore.*
- ✿ *—The Creator-Redeemer calls faithful people to become engaged with God in keeping and healing the creation, human and nonhuman.*
- ✿ *—Human life and well-being depend upon the flourishing of other life and the integrity of the life-supporting processes that God has ordained.*
- ✿ *—The love of neighbor, particularly "the least" of Christ's brothers and sisters, requires action to stop the poisoning, the erosion, the wastefulness that are causing suffering and death.*
- ✿ *—The future of our children and their children and all who come after is at stake.*
- ✿ *In this critical time of transition to a new era, God's new doing may be discerned as a call to earth-keeping, to justice, and to community.*

202nd General Assembly (1990)

- ✿ *Therefore, we affirm that:*
- ✿ *—Response to God's call requires a new faithfulness, for which guidance may be found in norms that illuminate the contemporary meaning of God's steadfast love for the world.*
- ✿ *—Earth-keeping today means insisting on sustainability—the ongoing capacity of natural and social systems to thrive together—which requires human beings to practice wise, humble, responsible stewardship, after the model of servanthood that we have in Jesus.*
- ✿ *—Justice today requires participation, the inclusion of all members of the human family in obtaining and enjoying the Creator's gifts for sustenance.*
- ✿ *—Justice also means sufficiency, a standard upholding the claim of all to have enough—to be met through equitable sharing and organized efforts to achieve that end.*
- ✿ *—Community in our time requires the nurture of solidarity, leading to steadfastness in standing with companions, victims, and allies, and to the realization of the church's potential as a community of support for adventurous faithfulness.*



Week Three

“Dominion”

Wisdom from Bruce Maylath...

Misinterpreting "dominion" can start in the context of the earlier verse, 1-27, "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them...." With godlike imagery, it's all too easy to perceive one's human self as a vicegod (in the sense that a viceroy is a person standing in place of the roy, the king), rather than a steward, or one managing God's creation. When, in the next verse, God gives Adam and Eve "dominion...over every living thing," and with "dominion" stemming from Latin "dominus," meaning "master," "lord," the translated text that we read in English has seemed to some to give license to lord it over the planet and treat every living thing as slave to serve the master humans.

Our Troubled Relationship with Kings

1 Sam. 8:4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, 5 and said to him, "You are old and your sons do not follow in your ways; appoint for us, then, a king to govern us, like other nations." 6 But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to govern us." Samuel prayed to the LORD, 7 and the LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. 8 Just as they have done to me, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so also they are doing to you. 9 Now then, listen to their voice; only—you shall solemnly warn them, and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them."

Our Troubled Relationship with Kings

8:10 So Samuel reported all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king. 11 He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots; 12 and he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. 13 He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. 14 He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his courtiers. 15 He will take one-tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and his courtiers. 16 He will take your male and female slaves, and the best of your cattle and donkeys, and put them to his work. 17 He will take one-tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. 18 And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but the LORD will not answer you in that day."

We Were *Meant* to learn from Christ the King

Matt. 21:1 When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. 3 If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." 4 This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

5 *"Tell the daughter of Zion,
Look, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."*

Brueggemann in *The Land: Gift, Promise & Challenge*

The crucifixion of Jesus is his willing embrace of homelessness or landlessness.²⁰ The resurrection of Jesus is the amazing restoration of power and turf when they had surely been lost (on this see the clear claim of restoration in Matt 28:19–20). The early church had to reflect long on the crucifixion/resurrection and the enigmatic way they are held together in the experience of Jesus and in the mind of the church. It is likely that the imagery of land-loss and land-gift became one of the primary ways for understanding and confessing this homeless one who now has been given dominion. (p.166)

The “Christ Hymn” from Philippians

Phil. 2:1 If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, 2 make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

The “Christ Hymn” from Philippians

5 *Let the same mind be in you that
was in Christ Jesus,*

6 *who, though he was in the form
of God,*

*did not regard equality with
God*

*as something to be exploited,
7 but emptied himself,*

*taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.*

And being found in human form,

8 *he humbled himself
and became obedient to the*

*point of death—
even death on a cross.*

The “Christ Hymn” from Philippians

*Phil. 2:9 Therefore God also
highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
10 so that at the name of
Jesus
every knee should bend,*

*in heaven and on earth
and under the earth,
11 and every tongue should
confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the
Father.*

A Simplified Life — Economics

The Tenth Commandment — “No Covetting!”:

*Ex. 20:17 You shall not covet your neighbor's house;
you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave,
or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.*

† It is as if God chooses the most difficult for last.

* NO *desiring* things which properly belong to another.

* NO *acquisition* of things which belong to another.

* The instruction given at Sinai anticipates the way our predatory eagerness to acquire more than we need (and thus more than properly belongs to us) and how that avaricious posture and greedy inclination to possess will skew our lives in un-neighborly and ultimately inhumane ways.

† Let us not fail to notice that this instruction is principally an instruction about how we understand our relationship to our *neighbor*. Three times the word “neighbor” appears in this single rule for life before God.

* Our inclination to compulsive consumption and addictive grasping is problematic not only because it destroys *our* life . . . it destroys the lives of *our neighbors* too!

From *Restoring Creation* (p.30)

Precisely because individuals and institutions have been relating to the natural order in ways that are so manifestly unsustainable that they put the future in grave jeopardy, sustainability gets at the heart of the practice and policy necessary for the stewardship of creation. Stewardship entails the incorporation of earth-keeping into earth management. The steward is a manager, charged with responsibility for tilling and keeping for the sustenance of the household. We humans can lighten our impact on nature, but we cannot eliminate it. Therefore, we must learn to manage wisely and humbly, remembering that "our property" is actually God's. The steward is a responsible servant, whose model of "dominion" is the servant Lord.

From *Ravished by Beauty* - Belden Lane

- ✦ *While naturalism sits at the heart of the Reformed Tradition, it retains a Christocentric theology first and foremost, as “The sun discovers to our eyes the most beautiful theater of the earth and heaven and the whole order of nature, but God has visibly displayed the chief glory of his work in his son” (Calvin’s commentary of John 9:5)*

Lane, Belden C.. *Ravished by Beauty: The Surprising Legacy of Reformed Spirituality* (p 22). Oxford University Press.

From *Ravished by Beauty* - Belden Lane

✦ *Sir Matthew Hale, a member of the Westminster Assembly, similarly urged compassion for wild creatures, given “the admirable powers of life and sense . . . in the birds and beasts. . . . All the men in the world could not give the like being to anything, nor restore that life and sense which is once taken from them.”*⁴⁷ Some Puritans even opposed hunting as a sport. In 1605, for example, Lord Sheffield complained that his former Puritan tutor, Thomas Bywater, “maintain[ed] to my face that both hawks and hounds, which I did then and do now moderately delight in, were not ordained by God for man’s recreation, but for adorning the world.”⁴⁸ George Hughes, Puritan vicar of Plymouth, spoke for many when he urged that man’s dominion (in Genesis 1:28) was “subordinate and stewardly, not absolutely to do what he list to do with God’s creatures.”⁴⁹ It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the first modern legislation against animal cruelty was passed in Puritan Massachusetts in the year 1641.

Lane, Belden C.. *Ravished by Beauty: The Surprising Legacy of Reformed Spirituality* (p. 32). Oxford University Press.

From *Ravished by Beauty* - Belden Lane

- ✦ *When William Bradford looked out onto the New England landscape, he saw a “hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men.” It was, for him, a devilish place, the stronghold of Satan and his “hellish fiends” (referring to the original inhabitants).⁶⁷ Far from viewing creation as a mirror of God’s glory and honoring indigenous people for their respect for God’s handiwork, Bradford legitimated the confiscation of undeveloped Indian land. He saw it as a matter of God’s chosen people overthrowing the insidious powers of darkness, exercising dominion in using fence and plow to master the world’s wild, disordered state.*

Lane, Belden C.. *Ravished by Beauty: The Surprising Legacy of Reformed Spirituality* (p. 38). Oxford University Press.

From *Ravished by Beauty* - Belden Lane

- ✦ *The Puritan ability to justify atrocities in the name of a divinely privileged social order was shocking. Their tendency to project onto aberrant women and fiendish Indians the dark forces of their own desire could lead to horrendous consequences. Making this even worse was a rapidly expanding thirst for land and market growth. In this turbulent combination of disordered passions, it became a matter of convention that nature itself required an exercise of dominion akin to the mastery of unruly women and native peoples. Land was assumed to be an “object” involving proprietary rights, no longer a “subject” mirroring divine beauty.*

Lane, Belden C.. *Ravished by Beauty: The Surprising Legacy of Reformed Spirituality* (p. 39). Oxford University Press.

From *Ravished by Beauty* - Belden Lane

- ✦ *What does one conclude from all of this? The stark, embarrassing irony I have to embrace as a Reformed Christian is that the tradition I claim—with all its passionate longing for God’s beauty—possesses vast resources for deluding itself. While inclined to celebrate an awesome God amidst the wonders of the natural world, its desire to possess can be cruelly twisted, leading to patriarchal, racist, and anthropocentric attitudes of dominion toward the “other.” The Reformed tradition, in short, has frequently failed to live out the implications of the best of its theology.*

Lane, Belden C.. *Ravished by Beauty: The Surprising Legacy of Reformed Spirituality* (p. 40). Oxford University Press.

From *Ravished by Beauty* - Belden Lane

- ✦ *A fifth and final aspect of [Jonathan] Edwards's understanding of the new spiritual sense as it relates to the natural world has to do with the role that nature plays in teaching us the way of the cross. The whole creation, in its groaning and travail as it awaits the promised glory, models the frustration of holy desire that human sinfulness has brought into the world. The earth suffers continually at the hands of human abuse. Edwards almost seems to speak with an ecological sensitivity when he deplores the "abusive improvement that man, who has the dominion over the creatures, puts the creatures to." He scorns this misuse as "a force upon the creature; for the creature is abused in it, perverted to far meaner purposes than those for which the author of its nature made it."⁶⁹ He grieves over humans killing brute creatures by the "thousands and millions" every day, making the earth a "meat shop of sin."*

Lane, Belden C.. *Ravished by Beauty: The Surprising Legacy of Reformed Spirituality* (p. 191). Oxford University Press.

From *Ravished by Beauty* - Belden Lane

- ✦ *Edwards lamented the extent to which the created world is “debased below its nature” by human pollution. “No wonder the whole creation is represented as groaning [sic] under such an abuse & in being held under such bondage,” he exclaimed. He not only decried the number of animals that humans daily destroy “to satiate their vicious appetites,” but warned that if dominion-sated human beings (the “cumberers of the ground”) continue in their sin “the creation will surely spew you out. . . . The world will disburden it self of you & and you shall be cast forth as an abominable branch.”*

Lane, Belden C.. *Ravished by Beauty: The Surprising Legacy of Reformed Spirituality* (p. 191). Oxford University Press.

Play Conservation International Short here.

From *Ravished by Beauty* - Belden Lane

- ✦ *It may seem unusual to root an environmental ethic in a theology of profound transcendence. But Edwards would say that there is no foundation for the true worth of the world in anything less than God. In a boldly theocentric theology, anthropocentrism is radically judged. For Edwards, human beings realize their createdness most fully, not in their exercise of dominion, but in their ability to delight, to extol beauty and nurture relationship. One of his great insights was that, “**God governs the world, not by the application of force or coercive determination, but by the creative and attractive power of God’s own beauty.**” [my emphasis - PHL]*

Lane, Belden C.. *Ravished by Beauty: The Surprising Legacy of Reformed Spirituality* (p. 198). Oxford University Press.