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which affirm the intrinsic worth of Earth or reflect the voice of the Earth community.

The studies in the project demonstrate that many parts of the Bible devalue Earth and the Earth community. When God sends punishment on a particular people, whether Israel, Egypt or another nation, the land, nature and living creatures often suffer unfairly. In Ezekiel, for example, the land is made desolate to somehow vindicate the name of God (Ezek. 6:14; 12:20 passim), not because the land has done anything to deserve such a fate. In Jeremiah, however, there are indications that the prophet hears the land mourning under the weight of these judgments (e.g., Jer. 12:4; 11).

Especially significant is the “mandate to dominate” found in Genesis 1:26–28, where humans are given the command to “rule over all livings things” and “to subdue Earth.” In the Earth Bible, the verbs “rule” and “subdue” (Gen. 1:28) are not softened but allowed to have their full weight. To “subdue” (lakhir’bosh) refers to forceful control and conquest (as in Ps. 72:8–11). Because passages like this mandate have played a role in the conquest of nature in some countries, the Earth Bible project seeks to highlight the negative force of such texts in the current ecological crisis and balance them with alternative traditions such as Genesis 2:15. In this text, the first human is placed in the garden to “till/serve” (la’avod) and to “keep” (lish’mor) it, not to “rule” and “subdue” it.

Between the years 2000 and 2002, five volumes of the Earth Bible were published. The five volumes are 1. Readings from the Perspective of Earth, 2. The Earth Story in Genesis, 3. The Earth Story in Wisdom Traditions, 4. The Earth Story in the Psalms and the Prophets, 5. The Earth Story in the New Testament. Norman Habel of Adelaide, Australia, is the chief editor of the Earth Bible, who is also preparing popular works based on these academic volumes. One of these is a volume of Earth liturgies entitled Seven Songs of Creation, also published by Pilgrim Press.

Norman Habel

See also: Animals in African Legend and Ethiopian Scriptures; Anarcho-Primitivism and the Bible; Biblical Foundations for Christian Stewardship; Christianity(3) – New Testament; Creation Story in the Hebrew Bible; Creation’s Fate in the New Testament; Ecofeminism and Biblical Interpretation; Hebrew Bible; Jewish Intertextual Literature.

Earth Charter

The Earth Charter is a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful world. It endeavors to identify the critical challenges and choices facing humanity and to provide a moral framework for the development of the emerging global civilization. It is designed to inspire in all peoples a new sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well-being of the human family, the greater community of life, and future generations. It is at once an urgent call for major social and economic change and an expression of hope. The principles in the Earth Charter were developed in and through a decade-long, worldwide, cross-cultural, interfaith dialogue on common goals and shared values.

First proposed in Our Common Future (1987), the report of the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development, the drafting of the Earth Charter was part of the unfinished business of the 1992 UN Rio Earth Summit. In 1994 Maurice Strong, the secretary general of the Earth Summit and chairman of the Earth Council, and Mikhail Gorbachev, the president of Green Cross International, launched a new Earth Charter initiative with
The vision of widely shared values in the Earth Charter does focus special attention on the environment. However, the document contains an inclusive and integrated ethical vision reflecting the realization that humanity’s environmental, economic, political, social, cultural, and spiritual challenges are interconnected. It recognizes, for example, the interconnections between the protection of ecosystems, the eradication of poverty, human rights, gender equality, economic justice, democracy, and a culture of peace. The result is a new holistic understanding of what constitutes a sustainable way of living and sustainable development.

At the heart of the Earth Charter is an ethic of respect and care for all life forms and the greater community of life, of which humanity is a part. The Earth Charter founds the principle of respect for all life on the recognition that all beings are interdependent and all life forms have value regardless of their worth to people. The sense of ethical responsibility begins with an attitude of respect for others and finds expression in active caring, which involves the prevention of harm and the promotion of well-being. A fundamental purpose of the Earth Charter is to encourage all peoples to identify with the whole Earth community as well as their local communities and to expand their moral concern and caring to include the present and future well-being of the entire human family and the larger living world.

The ethics of the Earth Charter are grounded in a vision of widely shared spiritual values. For example, the document affirms, “when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more.” It asserts, “the spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature.” The Earth Charter culminates with a vision of peace and the joyful celebration of life.

A final version of the Earth Charter was approved by the Earth Charter Commission in March 2000. A new phase in the Earth Charter initiative began with the official launching of the Earth Charter at the Peace Palace in The Hague the following June. Efforts are now underway to disseminate the Charter around the world, to promote its educational use in schools, universities, and faith communities, and to encourage its endorsement and implementation by civil society, business, government, and the United Nations General Assembly. Thousands of local, national, and international organizations, including hundreds of local governments, have endorsed the document and are using it as an educational tool and guide to a sustainable way of living.

Steven C. Rockefeller

Further Reading
Rockefeller, Steven C. “Global Interdependence, the Earth Charter, and Christian Faith.” In Dieter T. Hessel and


See also: Bahá’í Faith and the United Nations; Environmental Ethics; Religious Studies and Environmental Concern; United Nations’ “Earth Summits”.

### Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front

Radical Environmentalism comprises a cluster of environmental movements and ideologies that share an overall worldview that includes a perception of the sacredness of nature. The religious and ideological beliefs of these movements, and the criticisms to which they are typically subjected, are described in detail in *Radical Environmentalism*. Their basic orientation can be, however, briefly characterized: Radical environmental movements trace environmental degradation to anthropocentric and hierarchical Western philosophies and religions. They prescribe in response lifestyle simplification, political resistance to the destructive forces, and a spiritual “reconnection” with nature. These responses, they believe, depend on a “resacralization” of human attitudes and perceptions of the natural world.

By the early twenty-first century Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front (ELF) had become the best known of the radical environmental groups in the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom, and they had established beachheads in scores of countries on every continent but Antarctica.

### Earth First!

Earth First!, with its slogan “no compromise in defense of mother Earth,” was founded in 1980. It rapidly became known for its dramatic civil disobedience campaigns and the occasional use of sabotage in its efforts to thwart commercial incursions into biologically sensitive lands. In its first two decades it focused especially upon North America’s remaining old-growth forests, evocatively labeled “ancient” or “cathedral” forests to reinforce their special importance.

Dave Foreman, who left the *Wilderness Society* after he became disenchanted with the efforts of such mainstream environmental groups to arrest environmental decline, was the most charismatic leader among Earth First!’s co-founders (variously numbered at 4 or 5, depending on differing movement origin myths). His strategic purpose in founding the group was, firstly, to introduce and promote sabotage as well as civil disobedience as a means of environmental struggle, whenever possible increasing the costs and removing the profit from environmentally destructive practices – in other words, waging economic warfare against those destroying nature; secondly, to shame mainstream environmentalists into taking stronger stands by harshly criticizing them and exposing their compromising positions; thirdly, and ironically given the second tactic, he expected that by taking on the mantle of “environmental extremism,” a label often applied to mainstream groups by their adversaries, mainstream groups might appear more reasonable by comparison, thereby increasing their influence and effectiveness.

As importantly, Foreman wanted to attack anthropocentric attitudes, for he viewed the root of the problem as religious in essence. Drawing on historians such as Lynn White, Perry Miller and Roderick Nash, Foreman argued,

> Our problem is a spiritual crisis. The Puritans brought with them a theology that saw the wilderness of North America as a haunt of Satan, with savages as his disciples and wild animals as his demons – all of which had to be cleared, defeated, tamed, or killed (Harpers Forum 1990: 44).

So like most radical greens, Foreman blamed the advent of agriculture (following Paul Shepard and Jim Mason), and Christianity as well, for environmental decline. During Earth First!’s early years it was not difficult to find evidence of an anti-Christianity view, particularly since James Watt was the Secretary of the Interior. In 1976, before his appointment by President Ronald Reagan, Watt had founded the Mountain States Legal Foundation, which bills itself as a defender of individual liberty, property rights, and free enterprise. It is regarded by environmentalists as an anti-environmental group, one of the first and most important members of the so-called *wise use movement*. Watt was also an evangelical Christian who minimized environmental problems and was widely if inaccurately perceived (largely due to selectively quoted congressional testimony) to believe the imminent second coming of Christ obviated the need for environmental concern. Reagan, who had appointed him, told confidants that he also expected the imminent return of Christ.

Like most radical greens, Foreman saw promise in pagan religions for a biocentric ethics. Indeed, the most common perception animating the movement can be labeled “pagan,” if this is defined as spirituality involving one or more of two perceptions: (1) the Earth itself is alive and sacred, a perception that for many could properly be labeled pantheism (a word derived by conflating the Greek word *pan* meaning “all” and *theos* meaning “god,” signifying that “all is god”); and (2) that the world is filled with nonhuman intelligences – often thought to be capable of