

# Leaven

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## Editors' Notes

Chris Doran

[christopher.doran@pepperdine.edu](mailto:christopher.doran@pepperdine.edu)

Stuart L. Love

[slove@pepperdine.edu](mailto:slove@pepperdine.edu)

D'Esta Love

[dlove@pepperdine.edu](mailto:dlove@pepperdine.edu)

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## Editors' Notes

D'ESTA LOVE AND STUART LOVE

Nearly two years ago, Chris Doran, our guest editor for this issue, approached us about doing an issue of *Leaven* on the environment. This we were eager to do and we encouraged Dr. Doran to proceed due to the growing concern for the environment and the human effect upon it in our time.

There can be little doubt that the biblical description of creation in Genesis 1 acknowledges the harmony and goodness of God's creative work. But in doing so, the account also affirms that in the final and climactic creative act, humans alone are made in God's image and are given "dominion [*rādah*] over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Gen 1.28). *Dominion* means "rule" (Lev 25.43; Ps 72.8), which means, as a colleague of Stuart once observed, that humanity has a potent authority over the animal world. But the word itself does not characterize the exercise of this power: dominion can be implemented helpfully or harshly.

Having the *image* of God, human beings are God's representatives in creation and thus, of necessity, their task is to rule God's world accordingly. We know God's world was created "very good" in all of its parts. Further, we should keep in mind that humanity was created out of the earth and given the command to *cultivate* (*'abad*) it. The Hebrew word literally means "serve" (see Gen 12.6; Exod 5.9; 4.23) and, as Theodore Hiebert states, "The human being is seen to be in the service of the earth, upon which its life and livelihood depend. Human beings...are thus placed in a position of dependence on nature rather than dominion over it."<sup>1</sup> As a result, there is a constant need to recover God's perspective concerning the world in which we live. At this point we turn to Dr. Doran who will introduce the issue and its authors. We are grateful to everyone who contributed.

Coming up, our final issue for 2013 focuses on *The Revelation to John*, the topic of the 2013 Pepperdine University Lectures. Remember *Leaven* in your prayers.

## Guest Editor's Introduction

CHRIS DORAN

While the news media portrays the American landscape, political and otherwise, to be divided on the topic of environmental care, scripture is not. There is a consistent refrain in scripture about God's care for the natural world as well as for nonhuman creatures. Since human beings are made in God's image, we are expected to care for creation in a manner similar to the Creator. Moreover, while we in the United States often talk about environmental care in political, economic, and/or technological terms, scripture does not. The writers of scripture believe that God's call for humans to care for creation is a moral one; it has little to do with conservative or liberal politics, whether or not carbon is appropriately priced, or how many solar panels you may or may not have on your rooftop.

Don't get me wrong, all of those topics are incredibly important as a Christian decides practically how to care for creation, but they are secondary to the moral question: *Should* we care for creation? The desire to answer this particular question has not often been on the list of issues deemed to be important by the

1. Theodore Hiebert, "Genesis," *The New Interpreter's Study Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 8.

Restoration Movement and so I am extremely thankful to D'Esta and Stuart for providing a platform for this discussion. I encourage you to reflect carefully on this specific formulation of the creation care question as you read through a host of authors who have done the same.

Interspersed throughout this volume are six photos by recent Pepperdine graduate **KELSEY PATRICK**, each providing us with a chance to meditate upon the natural beauty of God's creation. In the volume's first article, **CAMBRY PARDEE** reminds us that humans are called uniquely to care for creation in "Making Earth Heaven: Ecological Implications of Genesis 1–3." Following with a prepared sermon for this volume, **AARON METCALF** exhorts us to listen carefully to the psalmist's words in Psalm 104, wherein the psalmist calls on us to praise the Lord for the things that we see in creation. Further explaining "Why It All Matters," **RONALD COX** fleshes out what it means to understand that all things were made by Christ and all things will be reconciled through him. Next, **GREG STEVENSON** examines what the creation imagery of Revelation might mean for a broader ethic of environmental care in "The Theology of Creation in the Book of Revelation."

In "God's Care for Creation: An Ode to 'The Little Things That Run the World,'" entomologist-turned-preaching minister **MATTHEW DOWLING** contemplates the beauty of creatures that many of us often do not find so beautiful. **JARROD LONGBONS'** article "The Church as a Community of Gardeners" reflects on the theology and practical impact of the garden project at his church in Illinois. In telling their story of how eating has changed in their family, Pepperdine undergraduate twin sisters **MEGAN AND MORGAN JEFFERSON** share how they believe the change has made them more faithful Christians in "The 'Christian Diet': A New Perspective on Food." **TIMOTHY ROBINSON** next asks us to consider the profound link between baptismal waters and a creation care ethic in his article "Sanctified Waters: Toward a Baptismal Ethic of Creation Care." Finally, the volume closes with a liturgical meditation on creation from **LEE MAGNESS**.

**CHRIS DORAN** TEACHES THEOLOGY AT PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY, MALIBU, CALIFORNIA, AND IS A MEMBER OF THE UNIVERSITY CHURCH OF CHRIST (CHRISTOPHER.DORAN@PEPPERDINE.EDU).

