

*Embracing Wholeness: An Earth Perspective for Covenantal Living*  
Book Review by Ruth Bowen, NTC UMW Social Action Co-Coordinator  
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Three years ago, *Embracing Wholeness: An Earth Perspective for Covenantal Living* by Jessica Stonecypher was a UMW Mission U study. I highly recommend this book, by Jessica Stonecypher, which is in the First UMC Denton library. It was an easy and fast read for me as the author writes well and the print was a decent size (the latter is always a plus). The chapter titles are:

1. The Sacred Creation
2. The Sacred Community
3. The Sacred Self
4. Covenantal Living
5. Making It Work

The last part of the book is a participant's guide, which makes it suitable for small group study.

We know everything is sacred because "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it." Psalms 24:1 (NRSV). By using the words "all," "those," and "world," the author of Psalms makes it clear that God includes everyone and everything he created and is creating.

The world is a work in progress. Creation continues. We best pay attention and do a significantly better job of fulfilling our responsibilities to be stewards not consumers! From these verses found in 1 Corinthians 10:23-31, we learn: "Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other" (v. 24); "for the earth and its fullness are the Lord's" (v. 26); and from v.31, "So whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God."

According to Jessica Stonecypher, to be in a covenantal relationship with all of life and to live a life of wholeness and abundance, we must first acknowledge our interconnectedness. Climate change reveals the global impact of what we do/do not do, have/do not have, and have done/not done to build up God's creation. Justice comes when we change our habits of overconsumption and share our abundant resources. Justice comes when we advocate for policies and practices that make for healthy communities. Justice happens when we come to terms with the fact that the world is broken and that as citizens in the world, we are part of the problem. "When we can admit our wrongdoing, there is more room for redemption and reconciliation." (Stonecypher, p. 97)

Growing up, I often heard my Mom say "You can be part of the problem or part of the solution." What's in the heart of who we are, as children of God, made in his image. Are we part of the problem or part of the solution? There are many hymns and folk songs that speak to the answer.

To paraphrase Chief Seattle, the earth does not belong to humans, we belong to the earth. All things are connected. We are merely a strand in the web of life. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.

Grace and Peace,

Ruth

## Climate Justice and Spiritual Growth Resources

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***Climate: The Force That Shapes Our World and the Future of Life on Earth*** by George Ochoa, Jennifer Hoffman, and Tina Tin. London: Rodale Books International, 2005.

Explaining how our modern lifestyles shift the earth's climate, the authors warn that we may be witnessing the beginnings of a mass extinction, caused not by an asteroid, ice age or volcanoes, but by what might be an even more destructive force—ourselves. And they offer steps we can take to avoid a global disaster. **550 Och**

***Climate Justice: A Call to Hope and Action*** by Pat Watkins, editor. NY, NY: United Methodist Women, 2016.

This study challenges readers to see what needs to happen for climate justice to become a reality in the world today. **550 Wat**

***Closing the Food Gap: Resetting the Table in the Land of Plenty*** by Mark Winne. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2009.

Food activist and journalist Winne poses questions too often overlooked in our current conversations about food: What about those people who are not financially able to make conscientious choices about where and how to get food? And in a time of rising rates of both diabetes and obesity, what can we do to make healthier foods available for everyone? **363.8 Win**

***Ecoliterate: How Educators are Cultivating Emotional, Social, and Ecological Intelligence*** by Daniel Goleman, Lisa Bennett, and Zenobia Barlow. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012.

In addition to stories at the intersection of education and ecological issues from across the country, this book includes a professional development guide and exploration of five practices of *engaged ecoliteracy*: developing empathy for all forms of life, embracing sustainability as a community practice, making the invisible visible, anticipating unintended consequences, and understanding how nature sustains life. **3637 Gol**

***Embracing Wholeness: An Earth Perspective for Covenantal Living*** by Jessica Stonecypher. NY, NY: United Methodist Women, 2018.

Explore the scriptural definitions of covenant and our call to live in covenantal relationship with our world, our communities, each other, and ourselves. **261.8 Sto**

***Hospitable Planet: Faith, Action, and Climate Change*** by Stephen A Jurovics. NY, NY: Morehouse Publishing, 2016.

This book provides a compelling biblical case for action on climate change and identifies transformative ameliorating measures and how to accomplish them. **261.8 Jur**

***Storming the Wall: Climate Change, Migration, and Homeland Security*** by Todd Miller. San Francisco, CA: City Lights, 2017.

Miller travels around the world to connect the dots between climate-ravaged communities, the corporations cashing in on border militarization, and emerging movements for environmental justice and sustainability. **261.8 Mil**

***The Suicidal Planet: How to Prevent Global Climate Catastrophe*** by Mayer Hillman, Tina Fawcett, and Sudhir Chella. Detroit, MI: Thorndike Press, 2007.

This book takes us out of the problem and into the solution of our international crisis. **LP 363.7 Hil**

***They Will Inherit the Earth: Peace and Nonviolence in a Time of Climate Change*** by John Dear. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2018.

Arguing that our rejection of nonviolence (the secular word for “meekness,” according to the author) is linked to the catastrophic effects of climate change and environmental ruin, Dear invites readers to return to nonviolence as a way of life and a living solidarity with Mother Earth and her creatures. **241.6 Dea**

***Troubled Water: Saints, Sinners, Truth and Lies about the Global Water Crisis*** by Anita Roddick, editor, with Brooke Shelby Biggs. West Sussex, UK: Anita Roddick Productions, Ltd., 2004.

Entrepreneur and activist Anita Roddick brings a sometimes disturbing, sometimes hopeful, always engaging, look at water’s crucial role in our lives worldwide and resources for making positive changes. **570 Rod**

***We are Water Protectors*** by Carole Lindstrom, illustrated by Michaela Goade. NY, NY: Roaring Brook Press, 2020.

Inspired by the many Indigenous-led movements across North America, this bold and lyrical picture book issues an urgent rallying cry to safeguard the earth’s water from harm and corruption. **E Lin**

***What We’re Fighting for Now is Each Other: Dispatches from the Front Lines of Climate Justice*** by Wen Stephenson. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2015.

This is a fiercely urgent and profoundly spiritual journey into the climate justice movement at a critical moment—in search of what climate justice, even at this late hour, might yet mean. **363.7 Ste**