

THE CREATION: SUGGESTIONS FOR BETTER STEWARDSHIP

1. **Reduce Automobile Use**

Whenever possible, walk to church meetings, to school, and to work. It is good for the body and spirit and provides valuable conversation time for relationships. Consider using public transportation or bikes for other travel. Carpool whenever possible. Keeping your speed down and maintaining proper air pressure in your tires helps to improve fuel efficiency. Do not idle your car more than 15 seconds; that will reduce gas use, engine wear, and pollution. Some Jews don't drive on the Sabbath. Maybe a new debate for Sabbath Day observance can be how much energy we will save!

2. **Reduce Water Use**

Buy water-efficient showerheads. Take shorter showers. When buying or replacing toilets, get water-efficient ones. And reconsider your landscape design to decrease your dependency on heavy watering. Have your sprinkler system analyzed for its efficiency. Use sprinklers in the early morning and never in the wind. Buy a rain gauge to help determine when you can avoid watering after rainstorms. Grass needs 30 inches of rain a year to grow, but some people use as much as 100 inches of water for their lawns, enough to grow rice.

3. **Reduce Waste**

Purchase reusable bags and take them with you when you shop. Reuse zip-lock bags, sandwich bags, and any reusable plastic packaging. Purchase one set of reusable plastic cutlery, and use it whenever you eat lunch at local restaurants. A reusable bottle for water is an excellent alternative to bottled water and other prepackaged drinks and plastic or paper cups. Consider planning ward, family, and neighborhood activities that will produce minimal paper waste.

4. **Reduce Energy Use In Your Home**

Be more modest in your use of heating and air conditioning. Experts recommend heating no higher than at 68° F (20°C) and air conditioning no lower than 78°F (26°C) Replace incandescent light bulbs with more efficient florescent bulbs or LED bulbs. Turn off lights and appliances when not in use. Consider that the purchase of a new, energy-efficient appliance, furnace, or air-conditioner may quickly pay for itself in saved energy costs. Adding insulation to your attic may dramatically cut utility costs. Windows insulate poorly; consider adding drapes or insulating blinds, and draw them at night. Plant deciduous trees on the south side of your house to reduce air-conditioning costs. Reducing energy waste will certainly help your community as well as your family utility bills.

5. **Reduce Consumption**

Consider ways to reduce your consumption of goods and services. Make a careful inventory of needs, and begin to make voluntary sacrifices of your wants. Paying a more generous fast offering and other means of giving of our talents all help us curb our appetites, be more generous in sharing resources, and lessen our impact on the earth.

6. **Recycle**

Recycle paper, plastic, and metal at home, work, and at church. This will dramatically reduce your garbage waste. Use a recycling program for all green yard waste, and consider composting. Recycle or resell your aluminum cans. We throw away enough aluminum cans in America to make 6,000 DC-10 airplanes every year.

7. **Work and Play**

Remember the inherent value of physical work, and enjoy the sweat of your brow! Consider ways to reduce your dependency on labor-saving outdoor equipment. . Mowing your lawn with a push-mower, raking instead of blowing leaves, shoveling instead of blowing snow can all have a considerably positive impact on air quality and the health of our bodies. One hour of a lawn mower use produces the equivalent pollutants of a 350-mile drive in your automobile! Consider forms of recreation nearby that don't use electronic or gas-powered machinery.

8. **Pursue Renewable Energies**

Explore options for using renewable and clean energy sources, such as wind, solar, and geothermal energy, in your workplace and in your home. Group projects may dramatically lower installation costs. Encourage city and state officials to support the development and public use of clean energy.

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9. Eat Wisely

Reread the Word of Wisdom, and consider growing a garden, supporting local food producers, and canning fruits in the summer. Reducing meat consumption by only 20% will have the equivalent benefit of trading in your car for a hybrid! The average meal in America travels 1300 miles to get to your plate, and the average American consumes 8 ounces of meat a day. Eat lower on the food chain, and avoid food that comes with excess packaging, especially fast food.

10. Cherish Your Home

Know your neighbors, human and animal alike, and know your neighborhood. Teach children to learn about the local fauna and the names of trees and flowers. Learn about the geology, environmental history, and ecology of our extraordinary mountains, rivers, and lakes. Explore the neighborhood near and far on foot with family and friends. There is a reason why the prophets sought the mountains, the desert, the forests, and the wild places to call upon God. The spirit breathes easier in the outdoors! Learn to love nature as evidence of God's love.

Resources for further study:

Brower, Michael and Warren Leon. *A Consumer's Guide to Effective Environmental Choices: Practical Advice from the Union of Concerned Scientists*. New York: Three River's Press, 1999.

Gottlieb, Roger, Ed. *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Handley, George, Terry Ball, and Steven Peck, Ed. *Stewardship and the Creation: LDS Perspectives on the Environment*. Provo: Religious Studies Center, 2006.

Handley, George. "The Environmental Ethics of Mormon Belief." *BYU Studies*. 40:2 (Summer): 187-211

Handley, George. *Home Waters: A Year of Recompenses on the Provo River*. Salt Lake: University of Utah Press, 2010.

Kingsolver, Barbara. *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2008.

Nibley, Hugh. "Subduing the Earth" in *On the Timely and the Timeless* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 1978). Also at <http://rsc.byu.edu/pubNibleySubduingEarth.php>.

Pollan, Michael. *Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. New York: Penguin, 2007.

Schut, Michael. *Simpler Living, Compassionate Life: A Christian Perspective*. Denver, CO: Living with the Good News, 1999.

Stratton, Richard D., Ed. *Kindness to Animals and Caring for the Earth: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Latter-day Saint Church Leaders*. Portland: Inkwater Press, 2004.

Williams, Terry Tempest, William B. Smart, and Gibbs M. Smith, Ed. *New Genesis: A Mormon Reader on Land and Community*. Layton: Gibbs Smith Publishers, 1998.

Websites:

LDS Earth Stewardship: <http://earthstewardship.org>

New American Dream: <http://www.newdream.org/>

Redefining Progress: <http://www.rprogress.org/index.htm>

Earth Ministry: <http://www.earthministry.org/>

If you would like additional resources, suggestions for readings for a book group, or if you have any questions or comments, please let me know (Georgebhandley@gmail.com or 801-574-6672).