RENEWAL
Students caring for creation
2010

GREEN AWAKENINGS

STORIES OF STEWARDSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY FROM THE NEXT GENERATION
“The work of renewal is a confirmation of both what God promises us about young people standing up for Christ ... and what I have seen in churches and college campuses around America.”
“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” (Acts 2:17, KJV)

God promises great things for today’s emerging generation of leaders. These young adults are brave, resourceful, independent, and creative. They are interested in important causes, and many aren’t waiting to graduate college to help out — they are taking action today to leave a better planet to future generations.

The work of Renewal is a confirmation of both what God promises us about young people standing up for Christ in the last days and what I have seen in churches and college campuses around North America.

Years ago, when I began traveling to teach about the Bible and its connection to creation care, it was tough going. But things are changing. I can no longer hope to meet all the requests to preach, teach, and write about the green revolution. A new generation — the Renewal generation — has taken up this vital mission. Millions more must join.

Through the ministry of Renewal, a growing number of Christian colleges and universities are, for the first time, asking professors and students to think about God’s creation in the context of campus and classroom settings. And they are right to do so. It is all too tempting for us to look at others and see their sins clearly, while remaining blind to our own. When we consider creation care as part of the core content for Christian higher education, we can naturally begin to take an accounting of our own use of the earth. Making changes in our own lives first, we can then go into the world and share our stories of a simpler life.

The revolution to which Christ invites his followers begins with this personal transformation — perhaps most powerfully occurring in colleges and universities today where tomorrow’s leaders are emerging. The generation reached by the powerful ministry of Renewal will inherit the earth after people my age are gone. No matter where we are in the journey, all of us must practice the Golden Rule: Do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

I pray that God’s Holy Spirit continues to pour out upon this rising generation of leaders, and that they will turn to the Bible for solutions to today’s most challenging environmental problems. Renewal extends this message boldly and graciously. May blessings shower upon their work to restore God’s creation.

Your brother in Christ,
Matthew Sleeth, MD

Author of Serve God, Save the Planet: A Christian Call to Action (Zondervan, 2007) and executive director of Blessed Earth (www.blessedearth.org).
Now is a momentous time for the Church and for our generation; the planet is in crisis, and creation care is a biblical priority for Christians. Our generation in particular is stepping up to make a difference and so the purpose of this report is to show what it looks like when Christian students and campuses come together to care for all of God’s creation. We want to demonstrate the breadth, depth, and diversity of the growing student movement.

To do this, we chose to focus on Christian campuses where the movement is currently most active and least known. Highlights of the report include:

- Over 50 diverse campus write-ups organized by geographical region
- Write-ups contributed by students, staff, and faculty on the respective campuses
- Featured stories of student leaders and how they made a difference on their campuses
- A comprehensive centerfold chart laying out key initiatives on each of the featured campuses
- A section featuring information about our key sponsors and ways to get more involved in their efforts

This report is merely a sampling and is in no way exhaustive. One of the early lessons we learned is that there is far too much going on to be able to cover every campus that is actively engaged in caring for creation. Even on the campuses that we have featured, we have had to focus on a small proportion of all the good work they are doing. This, in itself, is reason to celebrate.

Here is a summary of our other key findings:

- Campuses leading in creation care tend to have the following: sustainability coordinators, sustainability committees, environment-related majors, active student groups, recycling programs, campus vegetable gardens, composting programs, community clean-ups, creation care-themed chapels other spiritual life programming, and presidents who have signed the Evangelical Climate Initiative.
- Some of the recurring challenges facing campuses and students include: poor funding, time constraints, lack of commitment, regular student turnover, and lack of relevant technical expertise.
- All parts of the campus — students, administrators, faculty, and staff — are increasingly on board and eager to work together.
- Good mentoring from faculty and staff is key to developing successful student initiatives.
- Student efforts and activism today tend to be highly creative, thoughtful, and fun.

In the end, our message in this report is simple: We care deeply about all of God’s creation; these are our stories. We hope that you will be inspired to join us in bringing renewal to our campuses, communities, and the world!
In 2002, Eastern University students and faculty created a plan to become 100% powered by wind energy in five years. Instead, they achieved this goal in four years, becoming the first college or university in the country to do so. Students cover the costs of this initiative by paying an optional fee on their bills, which goes toward paying for wind energy credits. These put wind farm-generated energy into the grid that Eastern already pulls from.

Vice President of Student Development Bettie Ann Brigham, says, “The passion of students for environmental health has been enhanced by the awareness of imminent climate change, as well as a broader commitment to justice as it relates to creation care. Many of Eastern’s students work toward justice by giving a passionate voice to the planet and its people, and therefore bringing attention to areas of concern.”

In 2008, students toured mountaintop removal coal mining sites in Appalachia. After returning from this trip, they collected signatures from students and faculty, petitioning for a wind farm as an alternative to the mining. Students Ryan Axt and Bethany Skinner returned to one of the towns they had visited on the tour to install clean water barrels. Another student, Brittany Bennett, tested drinking water for residents. A group of students went to PowerShift09 and rallied in Washington, demanding action at the federal level.

In the spring of 2009, the student body engaged in a month-long campus-wide dorm energy conservation competition, demonstrating that students were not only interested in purchasing alternative energy, but also in reducing their overall usage. The winning dorm reduced their energy consumption by 71% compared to the previous year, and student efforts saved the university $5,000 on that month’s energy bill.
Messiah College has long been a leader in environmental stewardship among Christian campuses. For over five years, a team of engineering students in the college’s Department of Engineering and the Collaboratory for Strategic Partnerships and Applied Research have been refining a process for converting waste vegetable oil from Messiah’s dining facilities into biodiesel fuel for use in campus vehicles and as a substitute for petroleum-based heating oils. Given the project’s initial success, the U.S. Department of Energy recently awarded the Collaboratory a grant for nearly $500,000 to further research. In September 2008, Messiah College also dedicated the open-air Clifford L. Jones Solar Scholars Pavilion. The pavilion serves as an educational lab for Messiah students and the more than 7,500 elementary school children who visit the on-campus Oakes Museum each year.

In April 2007 a quarter-acre plot of land on campus was converted into the Grantham Community Garden: a student-started, student-led organization. This organic garden is a model of community-supported agriculture (CSA). In 2009, it employed two workers full time and produced 3,700 pounds of produce. Community members purchase portions of the garden, helping to offset any expenses, and then receive produce as it is harvested. This garden serves as an educational lab for Messiah students and over 7,500 elementary school children who visit the on-campus Oakes Museum each year. Messiah College students have expanded their interest in sustainable agriculture, from studying sustainable food production systems in Cuba, practicing urban agriculture in Harrisburg and Philadelphia, to using sustainable agriculture skills on the mission field in Honduras and Bolivia.

In addition to these ongoing projects, a team of students recently designed and implemented a rain garden stormwater management system for a new housing development. Whenever it rains at the new Cottage Brook Lane development near Messiah’s campus, homeowners reap the rewards of the beautiful and functional flowering rain gardens that David Foster, professor of biology and environmental science, and a number Messiah College biology students designed and built in 2008. These three rain gardens form the first such system in Upper Allen Township to combine bio-filtration and stormwater management on the scale of a residential subdivision.

Developers of the Cottage Brook Lane project, Jim and Joy MacDonald, are Messiah College alumni. They and their contractors provided site grading that would deliver the stormwater to the area designated for the three rain gardens. Students selected and planted vegetation that could bioremediate runoff water, tolerate a broad set of soil moisture conditions, and blend built structures with the creek bank forest. Says Foster, “This project is a model of service learning for students in technically demanding areas. It combines professional knowledge, skills, and community service with real projects, benefiting the community and building community and expertise at the same time.”

“THIS PROJECT IS A MODEL OF SERVICE LEARNING FOR STUDENTS IN TECHNICALLY DEMANDING AREAS.”
Sweating in the hot sun on a farm in Fort Myers, Florida, Gordon College students learn the joys of tropical agriculture. Each year, students in the Sustainable Tropical Agriculture course stay at the Educational Concerns for Hunger Organization (ECHO) farm to learn farming. They then go to tropical countries such as Haiti, Honduras, or Nicaragua. Gordon has a long connection to ECHO, a mission group focused on tropical agriculture. This connection stems from Gordon’s desire to care for creation and for the poor through agricultural assistance.

Kate Kirby, a 2009 member of the STA class, says, “Having studied sustainable agriculture methods at Gordon, the opportunity I am now provided with, to see where theory collides with the realities of culture and tradition, takes education to a whole new level.”

Gordon is also involved in creation care through “green chemistry.” Rowan Walker, a Gordon biology major who has been doing Green Chemistry research, says, “Green Chemistry is more than a definition or a practical list of 12 principles; it is a new philosophy of chemistry that is revolutionizing every aspect of chemistry.”

Rowan and other students are part of a Gordon College project: the Green Organic Literacy Forum (GOLum). The GOLum project reflects a commitment to practice chemistry in a way that is safer for people and the environment. Thousands of people have been educated about stewardship of the environment through student outreach teams in the Chemistry Department. Every year, a group of Gordon College chemistry students develops greener laboratory programs and takes its research both to local high school chemistry classes and to the American Chemical Society national meetings.

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EASTERN NAZARENE COLLEGE, in Boston, Massachusetts, is making strides at becoming a sustainable campus, while also reaching out to the broader community with a conservation message.

ENC’s Go!Green! Task Force has been instrumental in bringing a focus on recycling to the campus, and is presently working on finding ways to reduce waste and promote the use of reusable containers. The Task Force is also in the process of installing low-flow water fixtures, and is exploring ways to capture campus water runoff and return it to the water cycle. The school took steps toward greening graduation last spring by purchasing carbon credits to offset a portion of the carbon emissions created by people traveling to the event.

One way that ENC students are reaching out to the community is through the Animal Caretakers Team (ACT). ACT is a group of students working with Professor Jonathan Twining in the Biology Department to care for over 15 rescued or adopted animals that have been housed in the department since 2007, including several different species of reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates. The experience gives the students direct, hands-on practice with animal husbandry, as well as the opportunity to educate community members about biodiversity and responsible stewardship. The animals act as ambassadors as they go out to schools, churches, and other community organizations to educate people about animal welfare, ecology, and conservation. A goal of the ACT is to help the Christian community understand the importance of caring for God’s creation as an ACT of stewardship and worship.

STUDENTS AT HOUGHTON COLLEGE were excited about the promise of several environmentally conscious initiatives on campus for the 2009-2010 year. Students were welcomed on the first day of classes by bright yellow flags attached to the back of a few dozen bicycles. The bikes were donated to be used as a community bike share program. The idea was to offer free transportation to students as an alternative to driving around campus and using fossil fuels.

A preliminary goal for the student-organized Environmental Club is to replace the need for clothes dryers in campus housing by installing clotheslines and drying racks in all laundry rooms. Eventually the club would like to see the need for energy-sapping dryers eliminated by subsidizing the purchase of clothing racks for every dorm room. Students using their own personal rack would not only save energy and money, but also one additional trip to the laundry room.

There has also been much dialogue over the “Center for Sustainability” building opened in the fall of 2009. Previously a gas station and convenience store, the building was renovated into a natural foods co-op, with space for educational forums. The supervisors of the project are excited at the prospect of hosting workshops there on topics such as gardening and composting, as well as showing documentaries and offering the community resources on environmental topics. Students are pleased that they have access to nutritious, environmentally-friendly groceries only a short walk from campus.
NESTLED IN THE ‘COAL-COUNTRY’ of southwestern Pennsylvania, Waynesburg University students have many opportunities to advocate for God’s good earth. It is not hard to experience the goodness of creation in Waynesburg, as it is often recognized as one of the best places in the States to see a full array of fall foliage.

The EcoStewards club, under the advising of Dr. Janet Paladino, assistant professor of biology, works to keep Waynesburg pristine. The club has initiated a campus climate challenge in the residence halls, where water, electric, and gas usages are monitored in an attempt to save the resources these energies expend.

The EcoStewards club also takes its message of environmental consciousness into the local elementary school. The club recently received a grant that allows it to present simple concepts of reducing, reusing, and recycling to the children in fun and exciting ways. The hope is for the younger generation to understand and take pride in the preservation of the local resources, instead of absentmindedly exploiting them. “The youth are our future,” said Dorothy Rurak, EcoStewards club president, “Hopefully this project will result in a more educated community about important environmental topics.”

Rurak and the rest of the EcoStewards at Waynesburg University are eager to serve the people and places that are uniquely rural Pennsylvania.
In 2008, 11 volunteers from Geneva College’s Creation Stewardship Club gathered for three hours on a cool October morning. Armed with garbage bags and gloves, they cleaned up the college’s soccer and rugby fields, as well as areas behind the campus and along the roadway. The following April, volunteers united a second time to clean up a community walking and biking trail. After removing discarded debris, club members spent the morning planting grass seed and young trees to improve the appearance of the trail.

On campus, Creation Stewardship Club members have distributed paper and plastic recycling containers in faculty offices and student residences. The club has raised awareness of recycling benefits by posting fliers around campus and participating in Recyclemania, a 10-week-long national competition to see which college or university could recycle the greatest percentage of its garbage. By turning Recyclemania into a campus competition among the different residence halls at the college, Geneva’s environmental group inspired greater participation by the student body and placed in the top twentieth percentile of the Grand Champion division of the Recyclemania competition.

Geneva College’s student population is small, but the Creation Stewardship Club has raised awareness among students and faculty alike about the importance of caring for God’s earth. Through the efforts of volunteers at the college, the Creation Stewardship Club has implemented several small but successful campaigns to improve its campus and the surrounding community.
BRITTANY BENNETT, an environmental studies major at Eastern University, is one of the key leaders for the campus environmental group, Earthkeepers. She is also an active participant in Renewal, where she serves on the Student Leadership Team.

Bennett’s interest in environmental studies came about through the courses she took in biology during her freshman and sophomore years at Eastern. The professors challenged her perspectives and encouraged a more holistic view of stewardship. “We were shown that God reveals Himself through two books, His Holy Word and the Book of Nature, and both are important. What enlightened me was how nature is an important witness. It should be conserved,” Bennett said.

At the same time, she became friends with the leaders of the environmental club and began attending meetings. The club was and is still very service oriented. In addition to meeting during the week, the club spends Saturdays participating in restoration projects in the campus’ natural areas. Bennett attributes this service aspect to bringing home the lessons she learned in class: “Most of all, it was good fun, but God also revealed Himself through those many hours spent removing invasive species.”

Eastern University was able to host the first Renewal Summit during the fall of 2008. During the summit, over 50 students gathered from across the United States and Canada. They came for workshops, speakers, and networking. When Renewal launched as a network, Brittany leapt at the opportunity to become involved in their leadership team. “It’s been great continuing to stay connected with students as passionate about creation-care as I am and also to work with them in the community. This organization is very unique. Students play an integral role with making it easy to connect the actions of the network to the needs of students on campus,” said Bennett.

Though Brittany is passionate about many areas of environmental care and awareness, one area has become of particular interest to her: mountaintop removal. Bennett and other students from Eastern participated in tours with Restoring Eden in the summer and fall of 2008. They saw the destructive effects of mountaintop removal and met with local people whose lives and communities are being devastated by this practice. Shortly after this trip, Bennett helped with a petition, where she gathered nearly 150 signatures from students and faculty to support an alternative wind farm.

The students also went back to the region to help insulate water barrels, which residents of some towns must rely on for clean drinking water, since mountaintop removal has so polluted their drinking water. Brittany spent some of her summer testing water in another town that has had a large gap in testing. “I found the levels of iron and manganese very concerning,” reports Bennett.

Bennett’s latest project is working with Earthkeepers on a documentary on mountaintop removal: “We have some very interesting footage. We hope to create something compelling, that shows not only the strong moral imperative, but also our Christian duty to love our neighbors and pursue justice.”
Beyond the freshwater, the sand dunes and the forest, lies Calvin College and the most polluted watershed in Michigan. The water has bacteria levels 50 times higher than normal. In 2009, a coalition of individuals responded to this degradation with the Plaster Creek Watershed Project. During a three-day event at the college, members of the wider community, churches, and the school came together to learn about and discuss solutions for the 14-mile Plaster Creek and the surrounding 57-square-mile watershed. The event included informational lectures, discussions on creation care, awareness excursions, and brainstorming sessions for next steps.

As a result of this project, four area churches are joining to improve the health of the watershed over the following 18 months: by implementing the installation and use of rain gardens and rain barrels, by establishing educational initiatives on lawn fertilizers and personal ways to help, by holding multi-generational water festivals, and more. George Heartwell, an ordained minister and the mayor of Grand Rapids, who spoke at the Plaster Creek Watershed event, expressed his support and congratulations for the church’s potential, and his disappointment with how the church often neglects its stewardship responsibilities. He said, “Creation care is about your backyard. It’s not just something about snowcapped peaks; it’s the alley behind your house.”

Calvin is involved in a number of other creation care initiatives in its own backyard. One such project is the Office of Community Engagement’s development of a Campus Sustainability Guide to encourage the campus in its “responsibility to interpret, wisely use, and compassionately care for God’s creation.” In keeping with the ethos of this guide, the campus has also reserved one floor of a residence hall for a Creation Care Living-Learning Community, in which students commit to building unity and fellowship through sustainable living. Outside, a 90-acre ecosystem preserve contains the LEED gold-certified Bunker Interpretive Center, designed to help visitors understand their role as stewards of creation.

Calvin’s Environmental Stewardship Coalition, a student group, focuses on sustainability and care of the environment, while another student group, the Renewable Energy Organization, has installed a Demonstration Wind Turbine Project. Enthusiasm and work from groups like these, combined with the support of the school as a whole, have precipitated all of these projects and also allowed for Calvin to hold, in May 2009, its second annual “Sustainability Summit,” bringing together campus departments to focus attention on what can be done to foster greater environmental stewardship.

“We are paying attention to the place God has put us,” said Dr. Dave Warners, professor of biology. “He asked us to take care of it, to cultivate the beauty that’s there, and to overcome the brokenness.”
Wheaton College's motto, “For Christ and His Kingdom” is taken wholeheartedly by the campus’ leading environmental club, A Rocha. The first student chapter of the international organization, the club stays true to the organization’s goals of scientific engagement in conservation and witness to the community. One of the significant ways A Rocha accomplishes these ends is through the ongoing Amphibian Study and an annual Awards Banquet in conjunction with the Environmental Studies department.

Dr. Fred Van Dyke, faculty advisor to A Rocha and chair of conservation biology, has been intimately involved in the Amphibian Study since its inception. He says, “Scientifically, our study is designed to determine if habitat arrangement affects community diversity in amphibians. In the course of doing this study, we have discovered that many amphibian species formerly present in DuPage County have recently disappeared. Hence, our next phase of the study, beginning in the coming spring (of 2010), will be to restore populations of four species of locally extinct frogs (eastern gray tree frog, spring peeper, Blanchard’s cricket frog, and wood frog).”

“This spring, in addition to the field assistants for the amphibian study, there will also be an Education Community Outreach Coordinator Intern who will provide pathways and venues for community members to learn more about amphibian biodiversity in general, and about our study specifically, along with providing ways they can get involved,” says former A Rocha President and current field assistant Allison Engle ('11).

Through the study, connections have been made with local conservation scientists and managers. “At the end of each semester we hold a banquet to create a venue to affirm our mission together, thank outside scientists and managers, such as the DuPage Forest Preserve scientists, who have helped us,” says Dr. Van Dyke. The banquet provides opportunity to explicitly say why Christian commitment leads to conservation action.

Along with these more formal ties, working in the local forest preserves lends itself to many informal connections. Says Engle, “There are inevitably going to be people we run into in the forest preserves who will be wondering why there are teams of college students running around the forest in hip boots and carrying minnow traps. It is a good opportunity to tell the community members about the importance of amphibian biodiversity.”

In addition to the above activities, A Rocha works to educate the study body, works with staff to green the campus, has organized a letter writing campaign to senators, and sent members to the National Religious Coalition on Creation Care in Washington, D.C.
GOSHEN COLLEGE

GOSHEN, IN

THE ROOTS of the ecological stewardship journey at Goshen College are the school’s Christian faith and the belief that God calls Christians to care for all of creation. For more than a dozen years, the student club, EcoPax, has been promoting care for the earth on Goshen’s campus. EcoPax meets weekly to discuss ecologically sound lifestyles and to plan steps to change the existing unsustainable practices of the immediate and broader communities. Actions have included river cleanup, Earth Day activities, and recycling.

In 2007, Goshen College President Dr. Jim Brenneman signed the Presidents’ Climate Commitment, which initiated the college’s efforts to work toward climate neutrality. The Ecological Stewardship Committee was subsequently formed to provide leadership for the campus-wide commitment to sustainability and reduction of fossil fuel use. This 11-member committee is comprised of faculty, administrators, and three students.

There are students on each of the four sub-committees — awareness, audit, analysis, and advancement — who engage the campus in education and action regarding environmental stewardship. Student and faculty collaborate to initiate projects, which are approved by the Ecological Stewardship Committee. Three current projects are biodiesel production from cafeteria vegetable oil, solar water heating for the recreational-fitness center, and a prairie project that assists with stormwater management for a portion of the campus.

Joe Friesen, a senior Environmental Science major with a Peace and Justice Studies minor, is a member of the Ecological Stewardship Committee. He said that when he heard about the creation of the committee and its desire to have student involvement, he was very interested. “It was really a confluence of two passions of mine. The committee is setting the framework for some really big changes,” Friesen said.

Friesen also participated in the sub-committee that developed the campus Climate Action Plan. This plan documents the college’s commitment to reducing campus greenhouse gas emissions, and outlines initiatives designed to achieve an overall goal of climate neutrality, as well as a set of steps that will teach students the skills they will need to help society do the same.

Friesen said that despite the fact that several of the long-term plans will take effect once he has graduated, it is encouraging to see the fruits of his labor.

Most recently, EcoPax member Alana Kraybill said that one of 25 students who organized the campus events for the 350.org’s International Day of Climate Change on Saturday, October 24, 2009. Over 200 people showed up for the activities of the day. Kenagy said, “I think the 350 movement is important because it shows people on a global scale that they can make a difference. I’m actually going half-time in school right now so I can devote more time to organizing environmentally, because it’s really important that we do this now.”

One of the participants, junior Andrea Kenagy said, “I participated because of my faith and because I believe it’s a justice issue. People in the poorest regions of the world are feeling the greatest effects of climate change.”

NORTHEASTERN COLLEGE

ORANGE CITY, IA

When students at Northwestern College in Orange City, Iowa, were asked what the school’s 2009 Day of Learning should focus on, they overwhelmingly chose the issue of creation care. Northwestern, one of the two Midwest recipients of a Council for Christian Colleges & Universities’ (CCCU) Creation Care grant, used the Day of Learning to highlight campus stewardship projects: plans for wind turbines, a share-a-bike program, and further restoration of a 21-acre tallgrass prairie, among others. And in an effort to educate and encourage creative expression on the theme of creation care, the day’s events featured everything from talks by keynote speaker Dr. Matthew Sleeth to seminars on brain research to poetry readings.

“It was exciting to see students take something and make it happen,” said Jill Haarsma, who co-wrote the proposal for the CCCU grant that has provided for many of Northwestern’s stewardship initiatives. The 2009 Day of Learning also birthed new sustainability efforts on campus, including a Recycled Fabric Creations Project and the Recycled Notebook Project.

Students Heidi Doty and Erin Brogan will spearhead the latter project, resurrecting old cereal boxes and unused paper as notebooks to be given to incoming freshmen. Over 380 renewed notebooks will be distributed, and each will feature a list of environmental facts and stewardship actions on the inside cover.

“There are easy things students can do, and on Day One we will have planted the seed,” explained Dr. Todd Tracy, faculty advisor for Northwestern’s stewardship club, Terra Nova.

Terra Nova also produced a video advertising the Day of Learning, which is available, along with resources on the day’s theme, at Northwestern’s creation care website: www.nwciowa.edu/creationcare/.
Taylor University operates under the conviction that “Christian faith should lead to servant leadership, stewardship, and world outreach.” Students have been taught specifically about environmental stewardship in the environmental science courses and major for nearly 30 years, and in the unique masters of environmental science program for seven years.

One of the great ways that students in these programs exhibit stewardship is by serving in world outreach through a biannual mission trip to Guatemala. Students prepare extensively through courses in hydrogeology and international ministry before applying their knowledge for a month of service. The focus of the mission work is water and sanitation through wells, rainwater cisterns, home water filters, and composting latrines. In addition, health and hygiene training focus on sustainability — environmental, social, and economic — by implementing appropriate technology and serving alongside a host agency, Mission Impact, which remains present in the villages long before and after the Taylor team.

Back in Indiana, Taylor’s student club, Stewards of Creation (SOC), has sought to glorify God through the care and protection of his Earth since 1996. Two of the longest running SOC activities are Adopt-a-Highway and Adopt-a-River: great opportunities for students to serve their local community. SOC members also developed and help run the Annual Student Support in Salvaging Trash (ASSIST) program to channel unwanted items from students to local community groups at the end of the school year. The club also produces the biweekly newsletter The Green Plunger, which is designed to “flush out fresh ideas for the environmentally conscious Christian.”

More recently, students also completed the Wellhead Protection Plan for the town of Upland, created a Grant County “GreenMap” of local green sites and services, collaborated with local schools in stream and watershed monitoring, conducted a pilot environmental assessment of a local church, and began an extensive sustainability assessment of the Taylor campus and community.

Bethel University
Saint Paul, MN

The Compost Bin at Bethel University started out as the dream of a small group of students who donated a lot of time and hard work to their cause. At the onset, the students’ goal was to implement campus-wide composting. But after working hard to persuade Bethel’s administration of the advantages of composting on a large scale, the goal was simplified to provide composting facilities for one dorm, North Village, an apartment-style dorm with full kitchens in which many residents cooked, was a logical choice for the first composting effort.

The group that worked to get the composting approved collaborated with nearly every branch of Bethel’s administration, from Student Life to Facilities Management. Even so, as Luke Anderson, one of the students who led the charge for the North Village composting facility, said, “It took about 17 times longer than I expected to get the composting approved” — a testament to the hard work of implementing change.

Funding from the Bethel student senate brought the greatest boost to the compost bin initiative. That funding was achieved by a grassroots student petition, a great deal of hard work, and some industrious class senators. Now that the compost is available at North Village, there are hopes that it will spread to the rest of the campus. However, the hard work really is just beginning; with many of the original compost bin agitators graduating, efforts are focused on raising up a new “generation” to invest in the composting process and make it an indelible commitment of the Bethel community, and not just a fleeting dream of a few.
**Prairie restoration** is the main project of the Environmental Studies department at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa. The prairie-in-progress adjoins campus on land that was previously a farm supporting cattle, corn, and soybeans. Now, several years after the land was prepared and planted with prairie species, it is becoming a mix of tall grass prairie and wetland meadow, supporting species such as big blue stem, blazing star, milk vetch, cup plant, and sedges. The diversity of species provides a habitat for wildlife, stability for the soil, and water filtration that fosters healthier streams and rivers.

Around 50 students from the Environmental Studies and Biology departments, as well as members of Dordt’s creation care club Shamar, have been involved in the restoration. They have planned the project, harvested and planted seed, begun a native species demonstration garden, and removed invasive species from the land. In their work, they have learned hands-on techniques of restoration and become familiar with native species and a prairie ecosystem. That so few people are familiar with the tall grass prairie landscape motivates the students to share this piece of creation. Most of all, they are motivated to care for this land because it is God’s.

Dr. Robert De Haan, professor of Environmental Studies, explained that “Globally, tall grass prairie is one of the most endangered ecosystems on earth. Given the nearly complete loss of prairie in Iowa, restoration projects are needed to enable us to get to know the unique plants God created and placed in this part of the world, and to learn to appreciate the beauty of prairie.”
They knew that there would be some opposition to their plan. They knew that some people wouldn’t understand what they were trying to do. They knew that the most difficult part of their job would be convincing those opponents that this was the best option.

When the Campus Ecological Stewardship Advisory Group (CESAG) at Trinity Christian College voted unanimously to plant a newly formed water detention basin with native wetland and flood tolerant plants, they knew they had their work cut out for them. Even after the basin was planted, the new growth would not sprout until spring, leaving long months in which the basin looked much more like a mud-pit than a restored bit of native habitat.

So they set about educating the campus as much as possible, but while teaching people what they were doing helped, it didn’t entirely alleviate the concern that while the new plants were over-wintering, the basin was a (seemingly) barren muddy blemish at the entrance to Trinity’s Campus. A partial solution to this problem came in the form of an offer by Possibility Place Nursery. CESAG members wrote a successful proposal to them, explaining how they would use the trees they hoped the nursery would donate and, a few weeks later, they were able to set a planting date.

They enlisted as much help from the student body as possible, and quite a few students came out to help plant the new trees in and around the basin and learn about what they were doing and why. Now they not only had visual evidence of their restorative work in the basin, they also had many more willing mouths to spread the word about campus ecological goals and the possibilities of further projects.

By now the basin has bloomed and enjoyed a full season of growth, but the students know that their work is just beginning. As their Campus Ecological Tactical Plan reaches completion, they will have many more projects such as this one that may lack initial popular support. It is up to the newly formed Creation Care Coalition, working together with CESAG, to educate the students, staff, and community on the value of these endeavors.

**TRINITY CHRISTIAN COLLEGE**

**PALOS HEIGHTS, IL**

They knew that there would be some opposition to their plan. They knew that some people wouldn’t understand what they were trying to do. They knew that the most difficult part of their job would be convincing those opponents that this was the best option.

When the Campus Ecological Stewardship Advisory Group (CESAG) at Trinity Christian College voted unanimously to plant a newly formed water detention basin with native wetland and flood tolerant plants, they knew they had their work cut out for them. Even after the basin was planted, the new growth would not sprout until spring, leaving long months in which the basin looked much more like a mud-pit than a restored bit of native habitat.

So they set about educating the campus as much as possible, but while teaching people what they were doing helped, it didn’t entirely alleviate the concern that while the new plants were over-wintering, the basin was a (seemingly) barren muddy blemish at the entrance to Trinity’s Campus. A partial solution to this problem came in the form of an offer by Possibility Place Nursery. CESAG members wrote a successful proposal to them, explaining how they would use the trees they hoped the nursery would donate and, a few weeks later, they were able to set a planting date.

They enlisted as much help from the student body as possible, and quite a few students came out to help plant the new trees in and around the basin and learn about what they were doing and why. Now they not only had visual evidence of their restorative work in the basin, they also had many more willing mouths to spread the word about campus ecological goals and the possibilities of further projects.

By now the basin has bloomed and enjoyed a full season of growth, but the students know that their work is just beginning. As their Campus Ecological Tactical Plan reaches completion, they will have many more projects such as this one that may lack initial popular support. It is up to the newly formed Creation Care Coalition, working together with CESAG, to educate the students, staff, and community on the value of these endeavors.

**SUNY ARBOR UNIVERSITY**

**SPRING ARBOR, MI**

**NESTLED AMID A GROVE OF FARMS** and locally owned restaurants, and a short walk from a farmer’s market, Spring Arbor University celebrated its first annual Creation Care Week in 2009. Among lectures on the theology of stewardship, service opportunities on campus, and a stop on Renewal’s Green Awakening Tour, the event featured the creation-themed art shows of Kelly Ashton and Michael Stinson. Ashton portrayed the beauty of a creative God, as seen in graceful giraffes and smirking crocodiles, while Stinson’s photographs forced viewers to witness the destructive effects of mountaintop removal.

The Creation Care Week also birthed the university’s first ad-hoc Sustainability Committee, marking a new commitment of staff, faculty, and students. Committee Member and Communications Professor Jen Letherer said, “Spring Arbor’s name evokes a place of shelter in God’s creation, and my continuing prayer is that the community lives up to its name...that eyes of understanding are opened, that simplicity and stewardship are made imperative, that the literal springs and arbors of our university are tended as lifeblood.”
In 2008, Anderson University received grant money from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management to jumpstart a campus recycling program. A joint effort between students and faculty, this program is unique in that all paper products are sold to paper mills via brokers, which helps to offset the program's costs. And even though the paper is sold at market value and the current state of the economy doesn't allow for the school to make a net profit, this doesn't change the program outlook: The program is dedicated to keeping materials out of landfills.

Anderson's environmental club, Orange, Black & Green (OB&G), has also focused the school's attention on food service practices. OB&G is working toward the elimination of bottled water from campus by providing reusable water bottles and water filtration systems, as well as removing bottled water from meal menus. The club has also tackled the use of cafeteria trays by phasing out tray availability over time, thus saving the energy used to clean the trays. After going tray-less, OB&G is now using a similar technique to gradually introduce a once-weekly day of meatless meals in one of the three campus dining locations. A final project underway is the conversion of the campus shuttle bus from diesel fuel to used vegetable oil.

So far, student body reaction toward some of these changes has been unenthusiastic, but those involved have hope to improve attitudes through continued education on the environmental benefits of these practices.

In 2009, Tabor College's class in Principles of Public Relations was studying the greening of America and the emerging Creation Care movement. They decided to write a proposal to the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), requesting a $5,000 Creation Care Fund grant — a grant designed to help campuses that are in the beginning stages of their creation care journey. As was hoped, the grant was awarded to Tabor. This prompted Tabor's Student Senate to charter a Creation Care student organization and fund it with a portion of student fees. These fees, for the 2009-10 school year alone, will total about $4,000.

The Creation Care task force, working with the newly formed student organization, is pursuing several initiatives intended to raise environmental awareness and to promote better stewardship of natural resources. These efforts include a Creation Care week (jointly planned and promoted by the Creation Care group and campus ministries office), increased recycling efforts among students (with recycling bins strategically placed around campus), and the purchase of recycling equipment for their cafeteria (directed initially at cardboard and tin cans).

In addition, the physical plant has committed several thousand dollars of its budget toward upgrading light fixtures and other equipment intended to reduce the community's utility consumption.

Collectively, these early steps will not only raise awareness of sustainability issues on campus, but will also help the community to reduce its impact on the environment. Furthermore, the Creation Care task force hopes to extend campus concern into the local community and explore possible improvements of the area recycling program.
MIDAMERICA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY
OLATHE, KS

A FEW YEARS AGO, some students from MidAmerica Nazarene University had a vision to reconnect the community with creation. This began with the planting of a community garden. With a core of about 20 students and additional help from a science class, the team is involved in all aspects of developing the plots, from weeding, watering, planting, and harvesting to planning and continually vision casting.

They typically grow a plot of herbs including cilantro, rosemary, thyme, sunflowers, prairie wildflowers, strawberries, hardy hibiscus, day lilies, and chrysanthemums. The main focus, however, is on vegetables such as tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, lettuce, spinach, squash, watermelon, pumpkin, jalapenos, and bell peppers. Things are growing so well that the campus food service is even using some of their produce in the dining hall.

Over the past two harvests the influence of the garden grew beyond the crops that were collected. The garden represents a vision that students held: a vision of community, sustainability, and growth. It has helped inspire the campus to examine how they live in relationship with the Earth. They now know where some of their food comes from and what it takes to grow it.

When asked why a green revolution, one student replied, “A green revolution is only a byproduct of a lifestyle of stewardship in which God calls us to live. I find gardening spiritual because God is life, and God calls us to live. There is something so intimate about God taking time to create on Earth, because He loves us, because He wishes to enjoy a relationship with us.” MidAmerica Nazarene University believes that when they grow something together, they are taking part in redeeming a broken relationship, between each other, creation, and God.

“A GREEN REVOLUTION IS ONLY A BYPRODUCT OF A LIFESTYLE OF STEWARDSHIP IN WHICH GOD CALLS US TO LIVE.”

MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE
CHICAGO, IL

Moody Bible Institute is well-known for its outstanding Bible classes, ministry-minded programs, and recently ... its recycling program. Although the school has been recycling for over 20 years, the past five years have moved Moody to a new level. Sustainability Director Oakley Smith says, “We stress that at the heart of sustainability is the God-given mandate for mankind to care for his creation and that this is an even higher motive than the financial incentives.” Recycling bins have been set on every dorm floor, classroom level, and inside student centers. Above the bins are educational materials that clarify what is recyclable. Aside from plastic, glass, paper, and cans, Moody also promotes technological recycling.

In addition, the school participates in RecycleMania, a competitive program that compares the amount of waste reduction and recycling at universities across the United States over a 10-week period. In 2008, Moody placed first in Illinois for the Grand Champion division, and 69th out of roughly 200 universities nationally. The Grand Champion division measures waste reduction and pounds recycled per person.

Aside from recycling, Moody Bible Institute participates in many other green initiatives. As of the fall 2009 semester, the school’s food service went completely trayless and has begun promoting sustainable containers and the purchase of local foods. Low-flow showerheads have been installed in the residence hall bathrooms, and green cleaning chemicals are used campus-wide. Unwanted electronics that are still usable are advertised to those who may be able to use them. Moody has also begun composting vegetable rinds from the cafeteria and coffee grounds from the school’s coffee shop.

In learning to be a good steward of God’s creation, Moody has made changes to conserve, sustain, recycle, and reuse — discovering new ways to rethink waste in the city of Chicago.
THE IDEA to get recycling bins in the dorms at Trinity wasn’t exactly an epiphany; it was more that Jesse (at right) and other students were tired of carrying paper to the computer lab and bottles to the student center to recycle them. Getting bins in the dorms seemed like a reasonable request. Jesse was informed by the director of campus facility operations that, in the past, Trinity had gone to great lengths to offer recycling bins, but the bins were frequently cross-contaminated with trash so the bins were discontinued. Jesse realized that this meant that their objective had to change. Getting bins would be the easy part. The hard part would be teaching people to identify recycling bins as recycling bins. If they couldn’t do that, Trinity would not be able to bear the expense of buying bins and paying for a collection service.

With the support of the student ministries department, Jesse formed a campus group entitled “Creation Care.” New to the Christian environmental scene, they didn’t even know that creation care was a term used for ecological stewardship. The group’s mission was “to connect students with opportunities to conserve God’s creation.”

With the financial backing of facility operations and of student government, Creation Care purchased about 50 new recycling bins, two for each undergraduate residence floor. One bin was to be used for commingled recycling, the other for paper and cardboard. About 25 more bins arrived on campus in the following weeks to empty the dorm bins and to meet the recycling needs of professors. Before the bins arrived, Jesse did his best to educate peers and faculty on the use and importance of recycling bins. He organized the team to put up posters, make announcements in chapel, and talk to everyone they knew. The continuation of the recycling program hinged on students cooperating with the new system.

When the bins arrived, Jesse launched a recycling competition between the dorms just before Thanksgiving titled “Go Green or Gobble Garbage.” Creation Care and the administration measured the volume of recyclables every day and posted it in a common area. At the end of the 3-week competition, the losing dorms selected representatives to eat gross foods. The event was a huge success; more than a quarter of the students on campus came to the event. They recycled 1,400 gallons of bottles after that week and began to recycle about 800 gallons per week after that. On a campus of less than 700 students, where previously not a single bottle had been recycled in the dorms, they were succeeding! Later that semester, Jesse invited author Ben Lowe onto the campus to speak about creation care and what it means for campus communities and, currently, he is working on a project to help provide clean water to children in southwest Uganda by sponsoring wells at schools there.
SUSTAINABILITY AT POINT LOMA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY has grown greatly over the last few years. Efforts made toward a more green campus are particularly notable at PLNU because they have involved both students and the administration working closely together toward sustainability goals. It started when students passionate about environmental stewardship helped the campus recycling program become more efficient. As a result of their efforts, Point Loma has received many awards including one for San Diego recycler of the year. This interest on the part of students paved the way for the administration to create a sustainability coordinator position, which allows for new green changes and educational programming such as an annual creation care week.

The most recent changes that were brought about by students were two initiatives that came through the university’s student government. The first was to create a Green Fund of $5 per student each semester to serve as a supplemental budget devoted toward green projects. A great aspect of this Green Fund is that the use of the fund can be proposed by students or staff and is voted on by an already existing stewardship task force comprised of dedicated students, administration, and faculty.

A second exciting initiative, led by the PLNU student government, was the removal of trays from the campus dining hall. This allowed for a significant reduction in both water use and food waste, which also saved money from operating costs. Point Loma Nazarene University has learned through projects such as these that the most effective change usually comes when students, faculty, staff, and administrators all work together toward common goals.

Separately, however, students have also gotten involved in sustainable efforts through an environmental club that hosts film forums and manages a new on-campus community garden. The dedicated work of students in this group and in student government working alongside the administration ensures a green future at PLNU.
SEATTLE PACIFIC UNIVERSITY was one of the first Christian universities to sign the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), a comprehensive climate change initiative through which schools are committing to neutralize greenhouse gas emissions on their campuses. Sustainability as a campus value was reflected in 2008 student body President Joel Van der Hoek’s campaign platform of environmental stewardship and getting Seattle Pacific to sign the ACUPCC.

The climate commitment, which uses publicity as well as its own support infrastructure to motivate schools to make and meet goals, requires its adherents to submit annual reports detailing their carbon footprints as well as any progress toward carbon neutrality. In addition, signatory schools have two years from the date of signing to submit a plan detailing how they will become carbon neutral within a feasible time frame, based on their current emissions and resources. Seattle Pacific’s sustainability committee, formed specifically as a result of the signing of the ACUPCC, is now in the process of putting together a plan for emissions reduction, slated for release in May 2010.

Bethany Walrad, a 2008 Seattle Pacific graduate and current Sustainability Coordinator, is excited about SPU’s activity. Although mobilizing an entire campus to move forward in addressing sustainability is undoubtedly a difficult task, Bethany believes in the spirit of SPU’s campus. “One of our greatest assets is the genuine sense of purpose and desire, among faculty, staff, and students, to make a difference in the world.” What’s more, the SPU community sees going green as an integral part of its faith. Bethany adds, “People here get it. I’ve had many conversations with people here who have different ideas about what environmental stewardship means to them, but I’ve never run into someone who was outright against it or thought that it shouldn’t be important to the university.”

As the climate action planning process continues, one of the goals is to increase student involvement. It is Bethany’s desire to form the plan in such a way that it recognizes the important roles that faculty, staff, and students can each play in addressing creation care. “It’s not only a commitment from the staff to provide resources and infrastructure improvements,” she says, “but a commitment from our students to consider how their individual actions can contribute to a greener campus community.”

And students are participating and taking initiative. For her honors project, Kenzie Brister designed a solar panel installation for Otto Miller Hall, a large multi-purpose building on campus. Separately, students Alice Vander Haak and Kate Steensma started a community organic garden on campus. These are just a couple examples of the momentum that is building on campus to take creation care seriously. “It only works if we all work together,” says Bethany, and it’s her desire to get everyone on campus talking about how to continue to make SPU a leader in good stewardship.
The plateau between the Alpha Chi and Sigma Chi dormitories at Biola University was a fallow plot of land for at least 50 years. The rectangular field borders several residential homes and is up a steep grade, making the land virtually unusable for building structures or parking cars. In its decades of neglect, the land grew weeds and collected trash, becoming an eyesore for the neighbors and a burden for the grounds crew.

But in the spring of 2009, a coalition of students and faculty began to transform the vacant lot into Biola’s first organic garden. With goods and services donated from local companies, and the support of the Department of Biological Sciences and Granola (the student creation care club), the Biola gardeners have begun to transform the hard clay soil into a fertile vegetable garden. They are also composting green waste from campus landscaping and plan to compost kitchen scraps generated by the cafeteria.

Biology professor Jason Tresser envisions the garden as an educational tool: “Here students and staff can experience first-hand the impact food production has on the soil and the local habitat. I hope the garden will be a place that provides people with an outlet to explore and appreciate God’s creation, and to begin thinking about methods of sustainability and low-impact living that they could incorporate into their own lives.”

Kyle Shanebeck, a senior biological science major and president of the Granola club, hopes the garden will raise awareness of God’s creation in other students: “We feel like we’re helping our university with this garden. This is a good way to show how much we value God’s creation. It’s a way for students to express that love.”

“WE FEEL LIKE WE’RE HELPING OUR UNIVERSITY WITH THIS GARDEN. THIS IS A GOOD WAY TO SHOW HOW MUCH WE VALUE GOD’S CREATION.”
Whitworth University is a Christian, liberal arts school located in Spokane, Washington. Its environmental club, Good Deeds for Trees, has been working to impact the campus and Spokane community in a big way. Over the past few years, the club has taken a new direction toward focusing on the stewardship-side of environmentalism and trying to look less at the negative things happening in our world.

The club has joined with the Sustainability Council (a group comprised of faculty, staff, and students) to make things happen on campus. For example, in 2008, Whitworth followed other universities across the country in removing trays from the campus cafeteria. Now tray-less, the food service at Whitworth saved enough money to begin funding a Sustainability Coordinator position on campus. Additionally, Good Deeds for Trees and the Sustainability Council work together in the spring to plan a Sustainability Challenge that lasts for three weeks and encourages students and faculty members to have an accountability partner and focus on making eco-friendly choices together.

The club’s goal has always been to promote sustainability, but the focus for the 2009-2010 school year is to work especially hard to educate the campus. Whitworth students are no different from typical college students in that they are very involved in campus programs, clubs, and school activities and, thus, are challenged with being able to find time to become more educated on environmental issues. So, the club plans to address this need by partnering with other social justice groups on campus. A booth is set up in the student union building every few weeks promoting events and issues happening locally in order to inform students about causes that they otherwise might not have had time to learn about.

Good Deeds for Trees also wishes to act more and talk less. Already the club has attended an environmental film festival in Coeur d’Alene and has also participated in Renewal’s annual Day of Prayer for Creation. Above all, Good Deeds for Trees hopes to promote stewardship and the love of Christ by showing students that it is not just about the ground we walk on, but it is about the people with whom we walk.

WESTMONT COLLEGE
SANTA BARBARA, CA

WESTMONT COLLEGE, a school of about 1,200 students tucked in the hills of Montecito, California, is known for its beautiful location and high quality Christian liberal arts curriculum. However, recent creation care efforts have also revealed Westmont to be at the forefront of sustainability among West Coast colleges. In the spring of 2009, the Westmont Physical Plant released a recycling video game as part of a lead-up to an all-campus creation care week in April. Students could log in to the game and utilize a recycling bin named ‘Rudy’ in order to pick up recyclables and avoid trash. Adding incentive were gift certificates and T-shirts for the top-scorers.

According to game co-designer and physical plant employee Joel Patterson, “Rudy was more than a dorky little game — it was a genuine attempt to get people to think about being sustainable. We thought using something funny and creative like an original video game would be a new way to communicate the same timeless message.”

In conjunction with the video game release, Westmont also held its first Creation Care week, which was organized by their A Rocha student chapter and supported by campus services. The events included an environmental game show, individual sustainability pledges, an all-campus competition to reduce cafeteria waste, and even an all-campus picnic on Earth Day. According to one of A Rocha’s leaders, Julia Johnson, “The week was a time for the Westmont community to have a good time learning how to become better stewards of God’s creation.” Westmont certainly did that with over 300 people participating in the sustainability pledge drive and a multitude of students losing sleep to virtually recycle.
The voice of the Yamhill countryside first spoke into the community of George Fox University through the handlebar-mustached mouth of local farmer Ramsey McPhillips. Invited by philosophy professor Corey Beals to speak to an ethics class at George Fox, McPhillips introduced students to the proposed expansion of the Riverbend landfill along the floodplain and bank of the South Yamhill River. The school invited him to come back a few weeks later to speak to a student club on campus: Quaere Verum (Latin for “seek the truth”).

The George Fox community educated itself about the issue and organized a group of students to represent the university at a hearing before the Yamhill County commissioners, joining many independent farmers, winery owners, and others concerned about sustainability in the local environment. A small group of students met together multiple times throughout the week leading up to the hearing to draft a statement articulating their concern with how the landfill management company was being inattentive to the landfill’s effect on the surrounding farmland. They expressed a spiritual and physical attachment to the land that they inhabit, and they urged dialogue and cooperation among members of the community on opposing sides of the issue, asking that the county consider long-term solutions that would work toward the cohesion, and not the division, of the community.

At the hearing, the students’ statement was received after several hours of polarizing testimony from both proponents and opponents of the landfill’s expansion. As the students accepted their share of the blame, acknowledging that those who throw away trash are just as responsible for environmental damage as those who store it, the barriers created in this accusatory dialogue were lifted, and the hearing developed a more conciliatory tone.

One Yamhill citizen later wrote in response to the statement: “Of all the testimony, I feel your level-headed, dignified comments were what it is all about. Your participation straddled the ridge of righteousness always ascending toward the common good. It was genuine. I really think the commissioners were moved and thought-provoked. I know I was.”

The farmer who had first spoken to the George Fox community, Ramsey McPhillips, was also deeply moved by the students’ words, writing, “As I mentioned, I am not a religious person but this letter launched a thousand tears. It is beautiful.”

Not only were particular members of the community touched, but as a result of the hearing, the commissioners decided to postpone a decision regarding the expansion, and to hire an independent consultant to review available alternatives. The conclusions of this study, provided three months later, affirmed the availability of other cost-effective waste solutions, and it is now almost certain that the landfill will not succeed in its proposed expansion.

California Baptist University (CBU) has a built-in commitment to creation care. Located in Southern California, where demand for water and electricity is higher than supply, CBU’s emphasis on reducing waste through structural and systemic innovation not only provides water and energy for CBU’s campus community, but also demonstrates good neighboring. In taking only the resources it needs, CBU leaves more for its surrounding community and natural habitat.

“The University has been very intentional in providing spaces that are energy efficient to the highest degree possible,” said Steve Smith, CBU’s director of Facilities and Planning Services, in an interview with the campus newspaper.

Those spaces are constructed according to (and sometimes exceeding) California’s high-efficiency energy standards, incorporating coordinated and efficient HVAC and lighting systems that engage only when a room is in use. The campus has also reduced its strain on the surrounding region’s water system by expanding its use of an on-campus well and aquifer to irrigate athletic fields and landscaping.

But in 2008, CBU’s on-campus environmental stewardship efforts spilled over into the larger community in another way when staff and students assisted Habitat for Humanity in developing the first LEED-certified home in Riverside County. Dr. Anthony Donaldson, dean of the School of Engineering, and Peter “Rugg” Lehrbass, CBU’s central plant operator, worked with students to develop energy and water systems for the house, thereby minimizing utility expenses and natural resource waste in one low-income family’s first home.
GROWING UP in California, Westmont college student Anthony Waldrop was exposed to a diversity of God’s natural wonders. He remembers family trips up to the majestic Sequoia trees, as well as camping around the breathtaking geologic beauty of Big Sur and Yosemite.

These early experiences instilled in him a desire to see the natural world flourish, a desire that he sought to fulfill during his freshman year of college when he joined the Westmont Earth Ministry, a ministry devoted to fostering an appreciation of God’s creation and to encouraging the student body toward a more sustainable lifestyle.

However, at the end of that year, all 10 leaders of the ministry had either transferred or graduated, which led Anthony to step up as one of four very new leaders. Concurrent with the new leadership was the formation of the Earth Ministry as a student chapter of A Rocha, an International Christian Conservation Organization. Embarking on the challenge of assuming leadership of this rapidly changing ministry, Anthony and his co-leaders were able to transform A Rocha Westmont into a visible student group on campus that showed its desire to foster a biblical view of environmental stewardship.

According to Anthony, a major factor in his development as a leader in this area was a summit put on by Renewal in the fall of 2008. The summit was held at Eastern University, and A Rocha Westmont was able to send both Anthony and his co-leader Julia Johnson.

There, they were able to connect with other young Christian leaders, gain valuable training in how to talk about biblically based stewardship, and most of all be inspired by the experience to make a large impact on their own campus.

That following spring, A Rocha Westmont was able to greatly expand its programs by doing local habitat restoration, partnering with on-campus departments during the production and promotion of a recycling video game, and organizing a week-long creation care week where over 300 students, faculty, and staff pledged to participate in a sustainable action that they weren’t currently doing.

During his sophomore year, Anthony gained valuable experience in on-campus organizing, which involved working not only with other student organizations but also with Westmont faculty and administration. In the fall of 2009, Anthony and his co-leaders focused their efforts on establishing the Westmont Community Garden as a campus fixture that can be used for educational as well as economic purposes.

Ultimately, Anthony is a student who desires to share his love for God through his influence as an environmental steward. At an evangelical Christian college this passion can take on many shapes, but he relishes the challenge of sifting through the difficult theological and practical problems of creation care. While Anthony agrees that it is a somewhat daunting task, his past accomplishments point toward a promising future of environmental advocacy.
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| **G R E E N  A W A K E N I N G S  28** |
This chart is a compilation of survey results sent in from responding campuses at the end of 2009.

| FOOD SERVICE INITIATIVES | GREEN BUILDING PROJECTS | ENERGY CONSERVATION EFFORTS | TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS | CLEAN ENERGY INITIATIVES | GREEN PURCHASING STANDARDS | STUDENT CLUB/ORGANIZATION | ACADEMIC MAJOR | ACADEMIC MINOR | FACULTY RESEARCH |
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ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY  
ABILENE, TX

TAKE THE STAIRS at least once a week. Turn off the lights, fans, and electronics in unoccupied rooms. Use real dishes instead of disposable ones. Use a re-usable cup and mug every day.

These are just a few of the sustainable lifestyle choices students can choose to make when they sign Abilene Christian University’s Sustainability Pledge. With support from students, faculty, and the college president for sustainability initiatives, the pledge expresses a campus-wide commitment to becoming good stewards of creation.

Among the stewardship projects accomplished at ACU in 2009 were the purchase of a premium bulb eater for proper disposal of the energy efficient light bulbs the campus has been using for years, and the start of a Battery Recycling Program that collects and disposes of batteries in an environmentally safe manner.

These more recent advances are complemented by student-led initiatives like the “ACU Unplugged” competition that encourages reduced energy use in the dorms. Each residence hall competes to lower its energy usage from what it was the year before, and the contest is won by the hall with the greatest reduction. A “Box-to-Bin” program ensures that those boxes left behind after students move onto campus get into the proper recycling receptacles. That event is bookended by a year-end donating, swapping, and recycling event called “Recylemania,” to take care of the things students might otherwise throw away when they leave school. Events like these help students take the first small steps toward greening their lives.

Concordia University Texas recently relocated its campus from a 23-acre site in downtown Austin to a new 400-acre suburban location northwest of the city. The new campus incorporates a 250-acre nature preserve designed to protect several endangered species of birds and plant life.

In 2008, the school developed a Green Leadership Initiative to maintain a campus that enhances human health and safety while also fostering responsible urban environmentalism. The initiative promotes sustainability, institutional learning, and eco-friendly campus development.

Student government has been an active player in the green initiative, demonstrating strong support for recycling. A student-led conservancy group has also been formed to assist with campus management of the nature preserve, as well as to foster sustainability projects within the Concordia community.

Concordia’s Facilities Management has also played a key role in stewardship initiatives over the past decade with responsible utility consumption. Concordia was the first university to sign up for the GreenChoice program through Austin Energy, providing nearly 100% of its electrical energy through wind-generation in West Texas.

The new Concordia campus incorporates natural and energy-efficient lighting, automated controls, low-flow restroom fixtures, and a natural approach to landscaping and land management. Student housing units utilize heat-pumps that have significantly reduced energy consumption compared to dormitories on the old campus.

University sustainability and conservation efforts are driven by its mission to “develop Christian leaders” and model responsible stewardship of God’s resources.
WHAT BEGAN AS an extra credit opportunity for environmental science students at Baylor University has turned into a major joint recycling venture between the school and the surrounding city of Waco, Texas. Originally, professors in Baylor’s Environmental Science program began offering extra credit for students who volunteered to collect recyclables at home football games. At these games, students encouraged members of the Waco and Baylor communities to dispose of their trash properly, and helped direct them toward the appropriate recycling containers. Students actively engaged attendants at these sporting events by educating them on what they could and couldn’t recycle.

But recycling at Baylor Athletic events has really started to take shape in the last two years, thanks to a grant given to the local civic organization, Keep Waco Beautiful, which worked in tandem with Baylor University to place recycling containers at all athletic events. In these two years, Baylor has collected over 16,700 lbs of biodegradable products during sporting events, including over 267,200 individual plastic bottles.

In the fall of 2009, student groups outside of the Environmental Science classes began requesting opportunities to get involved. The Chi Omega sorority led the way, becoming the first Greek organization on campus to send members, en masse, to volunteer in recyclables collection. Thanks to the efforts of Chi Omega and other Greek groups, such as Tri Delta and the fraternity Alpha Tau Omega, the recycling program at sporting events is more successful than ever. As more students and student groups get involved, Baylor will evolve and refine the program to continue its success.
FORMED IN 1998, the ORU Environmental Stewardship Club has been active in both campus and community events. “We see it as a responsibility to be good stewards of what God has given us,” says Dr. Stephen Herr, professor of Environmental Science and advisor to the Environmental Stewardship Club.

The focus of this club is twofold: education and service. In terms of education, two to three times a semester, speakers such as Dr. Job Ebenezer (Lutheran Church of America), Angela Cantola (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), and Rev. Dr. Jim Ball (Evangelical Environmental Network) speak on wide-ranging topics such as urban green projects, endangered species recovery, and the strong connections between being pro-life, pro-family, and pro-environment.

In terms of service, club members run an aluminum can recycling program in the dorms and classrooms, and also participate in the Tulsa community creek cleanup event. This event was even hosted on the ORU campus in 2000 to clean up Fred Creek. Another practical effort is to make handmade paper from recycled exams and junk mail. This paper is sold as greeting cards for Christmas and Valentine’s Day. Some of the proceeds have been given to turtle restoration in Sri Lanka following the Pacific tsunami and subsequent funds are being saved to contribute to a microinvestment project and to purchasing trees on campus.

SOUTHERN NAZARENE UNIVERSITY has begun preliminary steps to become a more green campus. Students and faculty have a conviction that as Christians we are given stewardship over the earth and that, further, it is an issue of justice to all people to participate with God in the restoration of creation.

In 2006, the office of Spiritual Development formed a student group called “The Eco-Super Heroes.” For the last two years, this group’s goal has been to raise environmental consciousness on the campus. Through the work of the Eco-Super Heroes, a campus-wide paper-recycling program has begun, as well as plastic and aluminum recycling in the dorms and many other buildings on campus. This has been a major challenge, as the city in which SNU resides does not recycle. Students have placed “turn off the lights” stickers in many buildings. “Eco-friendly tips” are a common part of the PowerPoint slide show that runs before chapel gatherings. In 2008, the group held a dorm competition to see who could recycle the most aluminum.

The president’s cabinet and the Student Government Association are now working together to propose a small increase in student fees to cover the cost of a part-time “Stewardship and Sustainability” position that would oversee all “greening” efforts. In the spring semester, the SNU cafeteria will go tray-less to limit food and water waste. Finally, SNU is constructing a new residential dorm to standards that will obtain Silver LEED certification.
Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas, has sparked a strong sense of stewardship and environmental awareness among students and administration with its new Geology degree program and the soon to be added Environmental Science major. The motivation was evident in our highly successful voluntary staff and student clean-up event that was organized by the Wayland Baptist University Geological Society (WBUGS), a new organization on campus. Participants worked hard in cleaning up our local stream bed and community walking path.

Rosa Hernandez, a student volunteer, commented, “I hope this project grows into a reoccurring event, not only for Wayland students, but for citizens within the community as well.” Planning has already started for another community clean-up day that will involve local citizens as well.

Another project in progress by Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE) and WBUGS, involves a partnership with the Director of Public Works that includes such facilities as the recycling center, the city landfill, and water treatment plant. This project, starting in December 2009, is designed to teach recycling and environmental stewardship in area schools. It will consist of educational materials, a virtual presentation, and student interaction activities. Through this program and others to follow, students will create the stage for an upcoming free public seminar scheduled for the spring of 2010 for Plainview and its surrounding communities. This seminar will focus on Eco and Environmental Stewardship awareness, with presentations on water and energy conservation. It will also include a proposed upgrade on local recycling.

“I HOPE THIS PROJECT GROWS INTO A REOCCURRING EVENT, NOT ONLY FOR WAYLAND STUDENTS, BUT FOR CITIZENS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AS WELL.”
green awakening 34

Creation Stewardship is an ever-growing ethic on Montreat’s North Carolina campus, not just within the ranks of students, but also within the administration and faculty. Montreat’s administration is reviewing a campus sustainability proposal submitted by Seeds (the campus environmental club) co-founder and Renewal student leader, Aaryn Joyner. The administration has also just reinstated the Green Campus Task Force — a collaboration of students, faculty, and staff focused on integrating creation care into every aspect of Montreat life. What’s more, after reviewing the campus sustainability proposal, Montreat’s cabinet members recently voted to make sustainability one of the top budget priorities in the coming years.

Seeds is also reaching out to the student body through hosting creation care initiatives and events. They launched the Garden of Eatin’, Montreat’s student-led campus garden and also hosted a garden grill-out party; sent delegates to the Power Shift Carolinas Summit, representing Christian students at this major student environmental summit; held a successful Day of Prayer for God’s Creation that they co-sponsored with the college’s Crossroads Christian Literature festival; and sponsored a conviction, dinner, and evening talk with creation care author and speaker Dr. Matthew Sleeth.

Seeds is working to improve Montreat’s campus recycling program and launch month-long energy saving dorm competitions. In 2009, dorms competed to see who could conserve the most electricity on a percentage basis. This was their 2nd annual dorm conservation competition; in 2008-09 they worked on water conservation. Seeds is also looking at how to effect positive change in the local community. For example, Duke Energy is trying to expand its Cliffside coal-fired power plant just down the road in Rutherford County, NC. The new expansion would use conventional coal technology and emit an estimated 6 million tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere annually, which is equal to adding 1 million cars to the road each year. Community groups in North Carolina are rallying to stop this massive and harmful expansion — and Seeds is working to help Montreat students get involved in this critical campaign.

At Montreat, it’s often a struggle to engage and mobilize the student body. The fall of 2009 has been especially challenging due to near epidemic levels of influenza ravaging the campus and thus creating a huge backlog of schoolwork that often precludes extra-curricular activities. However, despite these obstacles, Seeds is going strong with growing turnout numbers and student involvement at each meeting and event.

Though at times fatigued, stressed, and overwhelmed as a campus and a club, they have reaped amazing benefits from only two semesters of active environmental stewardship. And they’ve got even bigger and better plans for Montreat. It’s going to take lots of work, but they’re confident that they will get there. In the words of student leader Lee Elliot: “God’s calling is too strong to be ignored — and God is calling for the renewal of this blessed earth. We here at Montreat are working hard to do our part.”

Montreat College

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Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia was involved in sustainability initiatives long before “being green” became popular, but the current sustainability initiative on campus with the broadest student participation is composting. Nearly all students are directly or indirectly involved with composting, as the majority of food waste on campus is composted. In addition, one of the most recent student-led projects has been the keeping of chickens.

Composting has been a student initiative on campus intermittently for more than 30 years, but in the past few years it has become more organized. Nearly all students participate by composting food waste and napkins from the cafeteria, or saving food scraps from their apartments. Students volunteer to help with various phases of the composting process. Presently, Jonathan Lantz-Trissel, the campus recycling coordinator, and a number of students maintain the compost pile. Food waste from the cafeteria is taken to the compost pile by students using the campus recycling bicycle and trailer so as not to expend any fossil fuels in the transportation of the compost. The finished compost is then used for the campus garden that students and faculty are cultivating to increase the availability of local food. EMU food service director Bruce Emmerson noted, “The campus garden also benefits from the composting, and we have been using vegetables from that all school year. I have to believe the students running the composting are learning a lot as well.” The increase in student interest and involvement in composting led to a 2008 composting class and the creation of a work-study position.

The keeping of chickens started in 2008, when the student club Earthkeepers obtained chickens due to growing student interest in learning how to care for them. With the help of Lantz-Trissel, Earthkeepers recently constructed a fence around the compost pile, and the chickens are now free-range in the compost pile and surrounding area. The chicken project started small, but if all goes well, it will expand.

An important consideration is whether the chickens and compost initiatives will be sustained long term. According to Lantz-Trissel, “Previous attempts at keeping chickens and composting at EMU have been pet projects managed by one or two people. The current project stands a high chance of success, as it has the support of the physical plant, cafeteria, and student leaders, and fits well with the sustainability goals of the campus.” Composting is a logical project at a university already known for a strong recycling program, and raising laying hens is an important step towards increasing the consumption of — and awareness about — local and sustainable food on campus.

THE INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE PRACTICE at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee, grounds its teaching in a multi-disciplinary understanding of professional sustainability practices. Its educational programs equip students for a variety of careers in corporate and business sustainability administration, facility management, construction, green development and renovation, sustainability consulting, and entrepreneurship. Lipscomb students can obtain a graduate certificate and undergraduate majors and minors in sustainability, as well as a Green MBA. In the fall semester of 2009, the Institute also began offering a master of science in Sustainability for students desiring a course of study more deeply involved in the scientific and technical aspects of sustainability.

In addition to comprehensive stewardship-oriented coursework, the Institute for Sustainable Practice sponsors an annual Green Business and Living Summit and Expo, which is an effort at connecting regional entrepreneurs with best practices from green business leaders around the country. The 2009 Summit and Expo featured keynote talks by Gary Hirschberg, the president and CEO of Stonyfield Farms, and Joel Makower, a green business strategist and executive editor of Greenbiz.com.

Lipscomb also puts the sustainability concepts it teaches to practical use. In 2009 it received the Governor’s Award for Excellence in Green Schools - Higher Education for implementing sustainable innovations such as three geothermal energy systems, native plant landscaping, energy-efficient lighting and water systems, and an emphasis on constructing facilities with recycled materials. The school's status as the first in the state to offer academic sustainability programming has only reinforced its commitment to implementing stewardship priorities on campus.
LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
LYNCHBURG, VA

Liberty University is often thought of as a conservative school. This label suggests that the university would be unsupportive of so-called “left wing” causes such as environmental awareness and even recycling. Happily, the opposite has proven true during recent years. Although previously the school recycled some paper products in offices, the students as a whole remained unaware and uninterested in the very simple mandate God gives us to protect the creation he created.

In 2007, Liberty students Lindsay Larson and Amelia Harr took it upon themselves to change this trend. The logistics required to implement campus-wide recycling on a campus of over 11,000 resident students were daunting. With the support of staff and faculty such as Sheri Pruitt and Dr. Karen Swallow Prior, they completed the necessary paperwork and facilities to get recycling provided in every dorm on campus, in classrooms, and all offices. The goal beyond having the physical ability to recycle on campus was to educate students about the importance of being environmentally conscious.

After procuring the necessary arrangements, they started the student club, Care for Creation Association (CFCA) to help raise awareness and organize the many aspects of the recycling program. The response, although small to begin with, was overwhelming in terms of the fervor many students had about recycling. Over the past two years the club has worked hard to get better recycling bins, to work with RA’s on every hall to ensure people are recycling correctly, and to raise awareness on campus with Bible verses and signs about caring for the environment. The administration allowed students to fulfill Christian service requirements through leadership positions in the recycling efforts.

Liberty also entered a national college recycling competition called RecycleMania. Most recently the club has played an active role in the community of Lynchburg, Virginia, in the hopes of showing the city that Christians take the job of caring for God’s environment very seriously. CFCA members volunteered their time at a community-based exposition fair supporting local environmentally conscious groups and businesses. The club also provided an informational table at the fair and spoke to many community members. In sum, Liberty University recycled a total of over 3,400 tons in 2008 and saw a 300-percent increase in the recycling of paper and cardboard from 2007 to 2008. Although CFCA needs to continue growing and focusing on reaching new freshmen to inspire good habits, the progress has been encouraging. It has been exciting to see the positive reaction from LU students, faculty, staff, and the community of Lynchburg during the past two years.

PALM BEACH ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY
WEST PALM BEACH, FL

SERVICE AND CREATION CARE are as much a part of the student experience at Palm Beach Atlantic University as top-notch academics and a Christian worldview. The University’s flagship Workshop program, a unique blend of work and worship, allows all undergraduate students to serve the local community during their years on campus. Through Workshop, students have donated more than 1.9 million service hours to churches, community groups, and organizations, including those dedicated to creation care. For instance, Workshop students have participated in the International Coastal Cleanup at local beaches and neighborhood cleanups organized through Keep Palm Beach County Beautiful. Also, Workshop students routinely perform landscaping and exotic plant removal for various organizations, and at times they have been called upon to remove hurricane debris.

In addition, students have beautified homes using recycled paint donated by the Solid Waste Authority through the SWA’s Paint Your Heart Out program.

Efforts are taking place on campus as well. The local chapter of Students in Free Enterprise organized a Green Week residence hall competition this year to promote water and electricity conservation and recycling. Also, an environmental science class spent a semester researching and producing a pamphlet containing tips on how to make a typical Florida home greener. Meanwhile, campus dining services continues to offer sustainable options for students, faculty, and staff, such as reusable take-out containers, “dining in the dark” to save energy, and peanut butter and jelly sandwich days to highlight the environmental impact of a meatless meal.
In 2009, Milligan College in Tennessee became one of six recipients of a creation care grant given by the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities (CCCU). Since then, the college has been able to establish Joe Whitaker, vice president for business, as a sustainability coordinator to oversee two of its most ambitious stewardship projects: an expansion of its campus recycling program and a campus-wide energy audit.

In order to reduce energy consumption and resource loss across campus, Milligan has used the CCCU grant money to systematically assess the campus’ current electricity and gas consumption. The next step in this painstaking process will be determining optimal energy use for the buildings evaluated, and the appropriate energy waste-reduction measures to implement. Meanwhile, Milligan’s newest building, the Gilliam Wellness Center, will be completed in the spring of 2010 and will be the campus’ (and the county’s) first LEED-certified building.

For students, the most tangible evidence of Milligan’s commitment to creation care is its expanded recycling program. At the start of the 2009-2010 school year, a recycling overhaul took place to establish the recycling of plastic, aluminum, and paper in nearly every campus building. A new 20-student-strong Creation Care Committee has also been birthed, and one of its first stewardship actions was to sponsor a petition to implement paper recycling in dorms. That petition was eagerly signed by students, faculty, and staff and will be presented to the sustainability coordinator for approval as the campus moves forward in its stewardship efforts.

CLAY HILL MEMORIAL FOREST (CHMF) is an award-winning 158-acre woodland that Campbellsville University in Kentucky manages as a regional center for environmental education and research on eastern deciduous forests. Campbellsville students have a passion to take care of this land, and with assistance from faculty, student-led groups have taken the initiative to develop service projects that help conserve and protect the forest.

The local chapter of Sigma Zeta, a student-led National Math and Science Honor Society, leads regular trash pick-ups along the road of CHMF. Once a semester, the students of Sigma Zeta get together to pick up as much trash as possible, keeping the land beautiful and free from waste. Students also participate in an annual prescribed native grass burn on the CHMF property. Through this experience they learn the role of fire in maintaining native grasses on the preserve and get an opportunity at hands-on learning by assisting with the burn.

Even though research and service projects are trying and difficult, the real reason students do them is to see CHMF become all that it can be. Stewardship is very important to the students, and they are willing to do what it takes to assist in managing the preserve. Over 25,000 local elementary, middle, and high school students have visited CHMF on field trips since it was donated to the college in 1995. Knowing that this place will be here for those students when they go to college is worth all the hard work on the part of Campbellsville’s community.

“STEWARDSHIP IS VERY IMPORTANT TO THE STUDENTS, AND THEY ARE WILLING TO DO WHAT IT TAKES TO ASSIST IN MANAGING THE PRESERVE.”

IN THE FALL OF 2008, John Brown’s Nature Society held a sunrise worship service in conjunction with Renewal’s day of prayer. Despite clouds and a little rain, it was a wonderful time of fellowship for all who participated. A sunrise service has been held every semester since.

In 2008, all of the dorms and housing on campus competed against each other to see how much they could reduce their usage of water and electricity. The project was called Captain Planet and was sponsored by the school’s Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) organization. Each month, the winning dorm received the money that the school saved as a result of the students’ conservation efforts. Over the course of the year, this project put about $15,000 into new TVs, foosball tables, and furniture for dorm lounges all over campus.

Also in 2008, John Brown’s student government succeeded in obtaining funds for an expanded campus-wide recycling program that placed recycling bins in every dorm room.

For Earth week, in April 2009, the campus had speakers, showings of Planet Earth, debates, and many other activities. However, the Nature Society also wanted to be involved in the larger community, a desire that was fulfilled when an on-campus ministry that runs an after school program at an elementary school asked the society to share a lesson with the children about conservation. As a result, 25 kids learned how they could help make their earth a better place.
BELMONT UNIVERSITY

OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (ONE), Belmont University’s environmental student organization, operates by determining which environmental issues are most important to the student body and then prioritizing those issues in its stewardship initiatives. In the spring of 2009, ONE surveyed the student body to that end, and is collaborating with various cohorts of the Belmont community to better address students’ environmental concerns.

For the 2009-2010 year, ONE is partnering with the Student Government Association by having a ONE representative in student government. Through that representative, a new survey of the student body will focus on which environmental practices students value enough to implement into their lives. With these results, ONE will work with SGA to write up proposals for initiatives in their order of importance to the student body. ONE will ensure that when stewardship proposals reach administrators, they demonstrate stewardship initiatives’ importance to students and benefit to the university, and they will have been through the process of policy review by student government. By partnering with student government and surveying students, ONE will have the authority to be the actual voice of the students on environmental issues.

ONE is also collaborating directly with administrators as they make decisions that could potentially include sustainable practices. Belmont University initiates some sustainable policies from the top down, and students are working to become informed about and involved in that process.

“We want to ensure that the administration is motivated to implement sustainable policies and projects that are important to students,” says Allison Berwald, president of ONE.

CARSON-NEWMAN COLLEGE

NESTLED IN THE HEART of Appalachia is Carson-Newman College, a small Christian college with a diversity of students. A particular group of these students takes great pride in caring for creation. These Students for Environmental Action (SEA) commit their time to increasing community engagement in environmental issues that have profound impacts in the local bioregion and broader natural world. They advocate for sustainable development, environmental justice, and campus ecology, and are especially concerned with mountaintop removal, air quality, and land stewardship — pressing issues in Appalachia.

SEA students devote most of their time to the cleanup and preservation of Mossy Creek, a small wetland that is home to several species of plants and wildlife, including a pair of mating Blue Heron. SEA does a monthly cleanup of Mossy Creek and has picked up anything from clothing, to glass, to furniture, to oil cans.

Dr. Larry Osborne, SEA faculty advisor, takes time from his schedule to get his feet wet with the group. “We are blessed at Carson-Newman to study and work at a college in a truly beautiful part of God’s natural creation,” Dr. Osborne says. “We are just a few minutes by foot to the Mossy Creek Wildlife Observation Area — why would you study or work at Carson-Newman and not be involved?”

All members of SEA believe Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s words that “Nature never deceives us; it is we who deceive ourselves.” College students may choose to stand back and watch creation’s destruction, or they may choose, like Dr. Osborne and the SEA students of Carson-Newman, to get their feet wet.
WHEN AARYN ARRIVED at Montreat College as a student in the Outdoor Education Department, it was apparent that she was outgoing and passionate, but what gradually began to develop in her was a commitment to campus sustainability.

The concept of “campus sustainability” had been floating around the college for the past few years, but only recently had there been a real interest in campus sustainability in the student body as well as in the faculty, staff, and administration. Various committees had been formed to explore this concept and determine the direction of the college, but administrators at the college really wanted to see some “movement” in the student body in order to move forward. This is where Aaryn came in. Aaryn was already working with fellow students to start a student environmental club (Seeds) and an organic community garden (Garden of Eatin’) open to on-campus students. Upon request from faculty and staff, Aaryn joined the newly formed “Green Campus Task Force” (GCTF) at Montreat to serve as the student body representative.

Aaryn did not want to stop there — she wanted to see passion turned into action. Realizing that “those who fail to plan, plan to fail,” Aaryn decided to make campus sustainability a priority for the last year of her college career. With assistance from faculty and staff, Aaryn drafted the first-ever comprehensive “Campus Sustainability Plan” for Montreat College. This plan will be foundational as Montreat moves towards its sustainable future. The plan is currently being revised by the GCTF and is on its way to being approved by the cabinet and president of Montreat. Approval of the plan will signal a paradigm shift in environmental stewardship at Montreat College. And Aaryn has played a critical role in this paradigm shift. Without her hard work and dedication to the task at hand, it is likely that Montreat would not be in such a place of positive change.

As Montreat begins to implement its campus sustainability plan, we expect Aaryn to be there every step of the way to see her passion turn into action. She clearly cares for the Creator and his creation, and she clearly cares for Montreat College. Now that Montreat is on its way to show “love and respect for the Creator” (as its Environmental Commitment states), we are sure that Aaryn will be proud to call Montreat her home institution.

“AARYN DID NOT WANT TO STOP THERE — SHE WANTED TO SEE PASSION TURNED INTO ACTION.”
With 80 acres of fields, wetlands, and forest, plus several salmon-bearing streams running through their British Columbia campus, Trinity Western University students have plenty of opportunity to get involved in “green” activities from habitat restoration to community garden efforts without even leaving campus. Add in the 73-acre TWU Crow’s Nest Ecological Research Area (CNERA) in the Gulf Islands, connections with A Rocha Canada/USA and the Langley Environmental Partners society, and you have a formula for plenty of hands-on ecological stewardship.

Examples of student-driven environmental efforts include:
- Inventories of plants and animals on the various university lands
- Maintaining trails as volunteer stewards in the campus Ecosystem Study Area
- Work with endangered and threatened species (salmon, snails, butterflies, frogs)
- Tree planting and invasive plant removal along streams
- Organizing a community fishing derby to remove non-native bass from a pond
- Adopting a stretch of highway to do litter clean-up
- Holding a Salmon River Trail Race each fall to celebrate running of the salmon
- Organizing Earth Week each spring with restoration work, outside speakers, panel discussion nights, and a local foods barbecue
- Teaching hundreds of elementary students about salmon through an outdoor education program on campus

Some of the most practical service and education opportunities in recent years have come through connections with agriculture. Convincing the university cafeteria and various other campus groups to begin composting was a challenge, but it led to a great infusion of fertilizer for beginning a vegetable garden. Trish Buhler (Environmental Studies ’09) was one of the students who successfully initiated the TWU Community Garden. “I saw my involvement as a natural progression into the environmental studies program. Sometimes school is not enough to teach you about the ways of the world, but getting involved in clubs and volunteer work helps to bring the things you learn in the classroom to life,” says Trish.

“You learn about the practical side of conservation looking at the politics as well as the method chosen to carry out an environmental action.”

At the heart of many of these activities is the A Rocha TWU student group – ARTWU for short — which has received an “Environmental Heroes” award from the local government for its efforts. Current ARTWU President Jesse Dias, a native of Brazil, has forged partnerships with other campus student groups — the Outdoor Club and the Social Justice Club — in recognition of the connections between their interests.

“I found in A Rocha a very special and powerful way to change people’s thinking about the environment. It’s not only that it is Christian, but also the centrality of community in A Rocha’s message,” says Jesse. “It’s so important for us to sit around a table and commune with each other. And the fact that we do that with locally and organically grown food I believe to be a powerful testimony to what we believe in.”
THE KINGS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
EDMONTON, AB

CREATION CARE is not a new concept to The King’s University College. The student club, The King’s Keepers, was established in 1995 at the beginning of the Environmental Studies degree program. In the early years the motto was C.U.R.E. (Christians United for Renewing the Earth) and one of their first projects was a campus mug program called C.U.P.P.S. (Cannot Use Paper, Plastic, or Styrofoam). The students negotiated a reduced price for beverages served to patrons using a CUPPS mug. Over the next few years this club completed water, energy, and paper management audits for the campus and worked with the former Food Services providers to increase local foods and composting on campus.

King’s students have also been leaders in the efforts to move the university toward operational sustainability. They do this in a group they call the EnviroCampus Consulting Student Environmental Consultants. Each year the senior students take on a research project during the Internship Reflections capstone class. This ad hoc group has prepared three reports for the administration on various operational aspects of sustainability — Campus Environmental Management System & Policy (2002); Land Use Management and Stewardship on North American Christian Campuses (2005); and Campus Sustainability: What is Practical for The King’s University College? (2006).

They have also had an eye toward the larger community. In 2007 the class planned and hosted a one-day series of events called “My Climate. Your Climate. Our Change.” Their goal was raising awareness and urging action on climate change in the Christian community in Edmonton. The students covered all conference expenses, securing $3,000 to cover the expenses that included keynote speaker, Dr. Calvin DeWitt, local radio coverage, and a pastors event. Over half of the student body attended events during the conference, which served as the kick-off to Globe Aware International Week on campus.

In January 2009 the Department of Environmental Studies at the university launched a collaborative interdisciplinary and intergenerational blog dedicated to environmental stewardship called “The King’s Green Pad” (kingsgreenpad.ca). Over 30 faculty, board members, staff, alumni, and students — including the college president and vice president academic — have participated in discussions on climate change, stewardship, ecological integrity, globalization, energy, waste, and food.

REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
ANCASTER, ON

From conception in 1982, Redeemer University College has been actively building bridges and breaking barriers in Ancaster, Ontario, Canada. The university is one of only nine distinctively Christian universities in the country; it boasts a diverse, inter-denominational student body, and it carries out scholarship in the context of a Reformed Christian worldview. What makes Redeemer University College even more set apart is the strong stance it has taken on environmental stewardship and campus renewal. Since the late 1990s, Redeemer has taken many steps to reduce its ecological footprint, with students at the helm of many of these initiatives.

In 1998, Redeemer began its student-led composting program, which has continued to efficiently recycle the university’s food waste year-round. The program, spearheaded by Redeemer’s Green Team, has 15 participating compost collectors who visit the campus dormitories every week on a 2-person/cycle basis. The campus has over 50 student residences totalling approximately 430 students — all of whom participate in the composting program. After the compost has been collected, dumped, and covered in leaves or grass clippings, it is picked up by maintenance staff for use in the university’s gardens and flower beds.

The institution itself also carries out a composting program for its Food Services department. In 2008, the Market (Redeemer’s on campus grocery store) and the cafeteria both took up composting all of their food waste products. And if any food is left after being used to prepare meals for students, it is reused for other recipes, so very little waste is created in the first place. In 2009, funding was provided for the inclusion of organic, wet waste, and other “compostables” to the university’s program.

Breanne Fennema is one student who has thoroughly modeled creation care environmental leadership during her time at Redeemer. In 2008, Breanne created an environmental stewardship plan for the campus as part of her graduating thesis project. Through this plan, Breanne helped to create awareness of the role of the Christian institution in developing leaders in stewardship in the name of Christ. The plan attracted attention from students, faculty, upper-level administration, and the municipality of Hamilton. Sparked by her initiative, the city of Hamilton recognized Redeemer University College as one of only six groups recognized as “Climate Change Champions.”
CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

TUXEDO, MB

CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY (CMU) is a Christian university in Winnipeg, Manitoba, that focuses on the peacebuilding teachings rooted in the Anabaptist faith tradition. CMU’s Creation Care Committee is new, but there is a lot of interest in sustainability on campus, and the committee focuses on a few key areas of interest to the CMU community.

Christians are called by God to be stewards of this earth, but as university students it is difficult to know what this involves. CMU’s Creation Care Committee has a passion for teaching students how their actions, individually and communally, affect the environment. Some ways in which the committee is developing the campus’s environmental knowledge include involving students in garbage pick-ups on campus and in its surrounding neighborhoods, educating students and staff through a forum put together by the Environmental Studies class, and holding environmental film screenings.

In the 2007-08 school year, the Ecological Peacebuilding Class at CMU created a report that focused on suggestions for sustainability specific to CMU’s campus. This report was created by looking at the practices of many other universities and discerning whether those practices would be suitable for CMU. This report is helping students at CMU follow lifestyles that promote sustainability on campus, but it also provides them with knowledge and skills for living sustainably off-campus.

Danielle Miller, a 3rd year student majoring in International Development Studies, highlighted the importance of this long-term view: “As a university, we spend time and money on groups such as sports teams and entertainment committees, but creation care? That will have a long term, broad impact on the surrounding community for generations.”

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITIES

Catholic universities have been leading the movement of environmental awareness and sustainability on Christian campuses, a natural outcome of the statements from recent Popes and the history of Catholic social teaching. To the end of promoting such campus sustainability, leaders from Catholic campuses came together for a conference at the University of Notre Dame in October 2009. Renewing the Campus: Sustainability and the Catholic University was the first conference dedicated to enhancing understanding, activism, and cooperation among Catholic universities in the area of sustainability. Over 200 faculty, administrators, and students from 45 universities across the country participated.

One of the emphases at the conference was collaboration. This cooperation was spoken of in the context of both learning from other participants and networking with an eye toward working together in the future. The former occurred informally over meals and during breaks between sessions. There were also more formal collaboration sessions during the last day of the conference, when administrators, faculty, officers, and students gathered in respective groups to share successes, failures, and ideas, and to form stewardship strategies for the future.

An example of one of the successes discussed was that of the Catholic University of America (Washington, D.C.), where the Green Club has teamed up with the Office of Energy and Utilities Management for an eco-challenge. Student leader Brian Alexander says, “After three months of taking shorter showers, turning off the faucets while shaving or brushing their teeth, and reporting leaking plumbing fixtures for repair, CUA students in seven residence halls have reduced water usage by almost 15 percent. Cumulatively, the students used 1.1 million fewer gallons of water compared to the same time period one year earlier.”

Another example of good stewardship was found at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, where a special team-taught class, cross-listed between engineering and theology, had students auditing, teaching, and implementing sustainability programs at a local parish, under the leadership of Dr. Margaret Pfeil.

A third example was that of Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, where there has been an emphasis on the environmental implications of two central tenets of Catholicism: a God-centered and sacramental view of the universe and concern for the world’s poor. To this end, Patrick Carter, Creighton University ’10, has led students on a spiritual retreat to an organic farm. The focus of the retreat was to demonstrate students’ connection to the land and each other. “This kind of personal development is what keeps the movement on campus going strong,” said Carter.

Catholic university leadership is also evident in Santa Clara University’s (California) Climate Neutrality Action Plan, which includes the goal of reaching zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2015.

The conference at Notre Dame concluded with a celebration of creation mass in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, highlighting the centrality of faith and community in the environmental movement on Catholic campuses. Student interns are now working to upload video of the entire event and publish a list of conference participants to facilitate future collaboration in the pursuit of environmental sustainability.
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Overview contributed by Rick Morris

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Green Awakenings 50
RENEWAL is a student-led creation care movement active on campuses throughout the United States and Canada. Together, we are mobilizing as the student generation to lead our communities in the Christ-centered stewardship of all God’s creation. We do this by:

» Inspiring – Communicating awareness around the biblical call to care for creation, current environmental concerns, success stories and testimonies of Renewal, and other stirring dispatches to keep the movement vibrant and growing.

» Connecting – Organizing online forums, job and internship boards, regional retreats, student conferences, and other accessible opportunities for you and others to build community and network around creation care concerns.

» Equipping – Providing hands-on training, personal mentoring, leadership opportunities, project toolkits, and other vital resources to empower the next generation of Christian leaders.

For us, creation care isn’t just a burden and a responsibility — it’s a blessing and an invitation to live in right relationship with our Creator. This means taking care of everything that God so lovingly creates and sustains — the earth and each other. With a heart for the poor and a commitment to following Jesus’ call to ‘love your neighbor as yourself,’ we seek practical ways to care for the earth so that all God’s creatures, as well as future generations, can have a healthy environment in which to live.

Access resources, check out Renewal, get involved, connect with our staff, and more at renewingcreation.org or by emailing info@renewingcreation.org.

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