



# Earth Matters

Riverview Eco Newsletter

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There are no passengers on Spaceship Earth. We are all crew.

**Welcome** to the first edition of Earth Matters, the Riverview environmental e-newsletter. Our hope is that together our community can begin to embark on a journey that seeks to explore what it means to practice environmental stewardship.

This e-newsletter has been set up to better inform those in our community and beyond about

current environmental issues and suggest practical ways in which we can **better steward** our resources and minimise our ecological impact on Earth - our home and God's creation.

With each edition you can expect a feature article, which will provide insight on a whole range of eco and sustainability topics ranging from Christian perspectives of

stewardship to specific global issues. There will also be tips, facts and resources to help guide us along this journey.

So, have a read and be challenged; and remember that it's our collective contribution that will make a difference.



## RIVERVIEW ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH CHECK

At Riverview, we encourage the staff to use their own mugs for drinks as opposed to using and disposing paper cups. So why don't you bring your own mug on the weekend.

With parking becoming an increasing problem, why not carpool or take full advantage of local public transport systems. This will be a great way to minimise our carbon emissions in Perth.



## Resources

**Earth Matters Podcast:**  
*Introduction - Tim Healy*



## Greentip #1

### Turn over a new leaf.

Australian workplaces generate over 12.5 million tonnes of waste each year. Another way to think of this is that every Australian worker generates 1.7 tonnes of waste a year. 44% of this waste is being sent to landfill.

While paper consumption has been generally declining, paper still contributes up to **70% of office waste** in many workplaces with over 10,000 A4 pages used for every Australian worker each year. Much of this paper is sourced from native eucalypt forests and is chlorine-bleached, a process that produces harmful toxic dioxins.

Make yourself familiar with the 3 "R's" - **reduce, re-use, recycle** and put them into practice. First ask how necessary it is to print a document, perhaps there are other ways of communicating information that require less consumption. If there are no alternatives, then print double sided on high-recycled content paper (50% or more) with smaller margins if possible. If you're printing something that doesn't require fine presentation, then re-use scrap paper or print in draft mode. When you're ready to dispose of paper be sure to put it in the recycling bin.

Business Recycling

## Greentip #2

### Don't Print this email.

Australian workplaces generate over 34 cartridges to landfill every minute? The less ink we use the more we can minimise our impact on landfills. To conserve ink, print in draft mode. It will generally lighten the shade, but you will still be able to read your copy clearly. Printer cartridges can also be recycled at your local Officeworks store.

Printer Cartridges

## Theological grounds for the care of the Earth.

By Tim Healy

**Can we hang out tonight  
Underneath Your ceiling  
Stare up at a million lights  
And listen to You breathing?  
Gravity (Tree63)**

Earth. This is our home. We have no other.

For as long as humankind has been in existence our place has been here, on earth. Surrounded by an innumerable company of stars and planets, this magnificent celestial island floats timelessly in a cosmic sea of unimaginable proportions and we, it's inhabitants, get to live out our days beneath its **beauty and majesty**. Vast oceans of deep blue mystery, towering pillars of shifting cloud, ancient granite monuments carved out over centuries by persistent waters and enormous burnt ochre deserts, stirred and sifted by patient winds. All these provide the setting for a richness of fauna and flora that remains unmatched in a universe of a hundred billion of points of light. To say that earth is unique and special is to understate the fact. **Earth is incredible.**

For centuries scientists have studied the cosmos in search of answers to the question of origin and in a bold attempt to understand the complexities of our universe. Through their quest they have been confounded, surprised, perplexed and elated by the sheer scope and scale of it all. The balance, symmetry, diversity and intricacy of the world in which we live have occupied some of the greatest minds of all time, but for all their efforts, few have conceded to the basic truth and profound reality that earth is simply our home - a place desired and designed by a **loving God** for those He created, a God who wants nothing more than to be with those He loves.

It is imperative that we understand that for the Christian, **nature is in fact creation**, i.e. the planned and purposefully executed design of the Creator, whom we identify as Yahweh, the God of the Old and New Testaments. There is no concept of mere nature in the Bible. Nature, derived from a Greek worldview, is by scientific definition a self-sustaining system complete with its own internal laws. The notion of creation, however, recognises that the universe is not self-sustaining, but is in fact continually dependent on the presence and power of God, the Creator, who is distinct from His creation, but intimately connected to its existence. Renowned Christian philosopher and author Francis Schaeffer evidently held the same conviction:

*'The beginning of the Christian view of nature is the concept of creation: that God was there before the beginning and God created everything out of nothing. From this, we understand that creation is not an extension of the essence of God. Created things have an existence in themselves.'*

This notion of nature as creation and creation as separate from the creator is foundational to biblical creation theology and is the cornerstone of a Christian Environmental Ethic.

In addition to being a conscious and deliberate act of God, the creation also serves as a revelation of God. Both the Old and New Testament Scriptures attest to the fact that creation contains a general revelation of the Creator and therefore has something to communicate regarding His essential self. The Psalmist, David, celebrates the universality of that revelation:

*'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows his handiwork. Day to day utters speech and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their sound has gone out throughout the earth and their words to the end of the world.'*

**Psalm 19:1-4**

For the apostle Paul, writing in the New Testament, the revelation of God within the creation goes beyond merely indicating the existence of a Creator. He points out that the very character or '**divine attributes**' of that Creator are also made known through the things created:

*'For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and deity, so that they are without excuse...'*

**The Epistle to the Romans 1:20**

Here Paul indicates that it is not only possible to know that a Creator exists through the revelation contained in the creation, but that it is also possible for us to know **what kind of a Creator He is**. If you consider for a moment the intricate detail of the microcosm, the awesome grandeur of the macrocosm, the infinite diversity, the inexhaustible creativity, the perfect balance and finely-tuned symmetry contained in creation, you can easily see why it is possible to deduce a great deal about the **nature and character** of God from it.

Christian geneticist and naturalist Robert Berry concluded:

*'God has written two books: a book of words, which we call the Bible; and a book of works, which is creation. He is the author of both. They are written in very different languages, but we have no excuse if we fail to read them both because of difficulty or (worse) laziness in interpretation. Those who read only one of God's books will necessarily discover only a part of God's nature and purposes.'*

From the above we can summarise the following and so begin our journey toward understanding why Earth Matters:

- All creation is good because it is the work of God.
- All creation is sacred because it contains a revelation of God.
- All creation is home to and sustains both human and non-human life forms.
- All creation should matter to us because all creation matters to God.

*'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows his handiwork.'*

PSALM 19:1

Earth Matters

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