evidence for her conviction. It may be that faith can weather the storms of
doubt because it finds enough evidence of a public nature to dispel the
doubts, or at least to defuse their power. But one may also find that the power
of one's early experience, the private evidence that planted the seeds of faith
to begin with, is sufficient to sustain it during the strongest intellectual gales.

The account Karl Rahner gives of his experience will sound familiar to
many. "I find myself a believer and have not come upon any good reason for
not believing. I was baptized and brought up in the faith, and so the faith that
is my inheritance has also become the faith of my own deliberate choice, a
real, personal faith."

Another reason to question the use of "levels" language with reference
to different epistemic situations is that it seems to undervalue an essential
characteristic of faith. As generally described, faith exhibits an "in spite of"
quality. It involves trust in the absence of conclusive evidence or proof. Faced
with overwhelming, or coercive, evidence, one would have no need—indeed,
there would be no room—for faith. In that case, one's belief would simply be
the product of the evidence. If one's embrace of certain beliefs involves faith,
it seems, there must be a distance between what she affirms and what the
evidence fully supports. What seems to be a relative deficiency from a purely
epistemic standpoint therefore seems to be an essential feature of faith. If
so, then the highest epistemic level in Clayton and Knapp's scheme is not
necessarily superior to some of the other positions they describe.

Wolfhart Pannenberg's distinction between the "trusting certainty of
faith" and "absolute theoretical certainty" may be helpful here. Because "faith
lives from the truth of its foundations," it is entirely appropriate for us to
assess the evidence that supports the claims of faith. But since true faith
consists in the "total committal of one's existence in the act of trust," we
distort the nature of faith if we seek to extend this theoretical credibility into
"an absolute theoretical certainty."

However tempting it is to tweak their formulations, the fact remains that
Clayton and Knapp provide a wonderfully nuanced account of responsible
belief. I can't recall any discussion of religious epistemology that is more
sensitive than theirs to the complex experience of those who find themselves
grasped both by the power of religious commitment and the summons to
intellectual responsibility. The authors have placed us all in their debt.

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Dunbar, S., Gibson L. J., and Rasi, H. M., eds., Entrusted: Christians and

A range of environmental issues have increasingly challenged Christians to
consider the appropriate balance between consumption and preservation of
limited resources, given the declining condition of our sinful planet. Entrusted
is a collection of 23 articles that offer concise yet comprehensive introductory
responses to these pressing issues. Under the editorial leadership of Dunbar,
Gibson, and Rasi, a group of authors with diverse backgrounds (including
theologians, ethicists, scientists, environmentalists, and educators) have taken
the task to guide Christians through these urgent matters by providing a
theory and practice of earth stewardship grounded in the biblical mandate
pronounced in Gen 1:27-30. All authors share a Christian worldview and
build upon this common foundation with tools unique to their education,
enriching the exposition with key insights from their area of expertise.

The book is structured in five sections, covering five main themes:
Christians and the Environment, Animal and Environmental Ethics, Human
Health and the Environment, Biodiversity and Conservation Strategies, and
Environmental Education.

The first section is an overview of the biblical foundations for earth
stewardship. Through a host of Bible verses, the writers show the extensive
involvement God manifests in His care for all creation, and challenge us to
consider our attitude toward animals and nature in light of God's example.
The section does a marvelous job at highlighting biblical details referring
to animals and/or nature that often are overlooked. Once unearthed, these
details beckon the reader to rethink many familiar passages. Stories, laws,
covenants and commands, poetry, feasts, and prophecies gain more depth
and become more relevant as we discover how nature or animals are involved.
From the opening section, the authors establish that there is a correlation
between one's worldview and the care for nature, and state the belief in God as
a foundational presupposition. Rasi makes a compelling case for a theocentric
(versus anthropocentric or ecocentric) approach to environmental care. This
biblical worldview and theocentric approach invites the reader to exercise
free will by making responsible choices driven by an understanding of God's
relation to His creation and the interconnection of all creatures, and not by
greed, selfishness, and a desire to display power. The section concludes with
Tonstad's exegetical case for Satan being the destroyer of the earth, while
God is the healer, "no less [. . .] of the earth than of human creation" (60).

Section two tackles the relationship between humans and animals.
Gerald Winslow makes a distinction between animals and other life forms
(such as plants) and offers good argumentation that all animals (pets and wild
animals alike) should be treated with equal care, though guided by specific
principles based on the particularities of that animal. In view of this, he holds
that, while humans and their basic needs come first, a plant-based diet is
ethically preferable when possible, and that injuring animals for sport and
entertainment is wrong (71). The section continues with an overview of
the principles guiding animal research, wherein Mark Carr calls for higher
standards than the already rigorous “Reduce, Refine, Replace” ethics of the
AAALAC (77). Such higher standards, he suggests, should arise from our
understanding of “dominion” in Gen 1:28 as responsible stewardship versus
selfish use and abuse (79-80), and from our view of animals as having moral
status (or moral value—that is, they are “so valuable that [they] should be
treated with special regard” (77). Sandra Blackmer gives the reader insight into
the animals’ living conditions in industrialized farms today. Through concise
yet frank and graphic descriptions, we learn of what the animals suffer from
birth to transport to slaughter, the impact of this treatment on the farm workers and the environment, and individual action we all can take. The last chapter offers a categorization of GMOs (genetically modified organisms) and an evaluation of the risks each type of GMO involves.

Section three covers the connection between environment and human health. Roy Gane analyzes key biblical passages that suggest an interrelation between the physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional dimensions of the human being (114), and elaborates on the impact that laws of restraint, rest, respect, and abstinence have upon human and environmental health. Dunbar emphasizes that “human health is intimately integrated with biodiversity in almost every conceivable way” (127), and educates the reader on the risks of biodiversity loss and ecosystems disruptions with specific, eye-opening examples. The section concludes with a presentation of the interconnection between geologic material and processes, and human health.

Section four goes more in detail on biodiversity and conservation strategies which, understood with the heart of a dedicated Christian, have great potential to make a difference for the better for the entire creation. Section five concludes the book with six chapters that guide Adventists on how we can contribute to holistic environmental health through practical measures to take in our homes, our institutions and industries.

Entrusted is a rich, much needed contribution to our theoretical and practical appreciation of the call to support a holistic earth health. It is written in an engaging style that maintains the reader’s interest with many key insights from highly qualified contributors.

It is evident that a biblical worldview shapes the direction of thought of the authors of the book. The implications of their shared Christian worldview upon the research and proposals may be viewed as faulty by other professionals. Since the presuppositions are stated and affirmed from the beginning and throughout the book, however, a fair reading of their work must take into consideration the reference points they choose and consistently apply.

The book tends to be a little repetitive in some key thoughts. This is possibly a result of the authors’ enthusiastic commitment to Scriptures, and an estimated occurrence for multi-authored books. A more thorough editorial scrutiny could have prevented the duplications without losing central ideas, and thus make the reading experience smoother.

The strength of the book resides in the variety of perspectives presented, substantiated with a solid number of primary and secondary references particular to the different areas of expertise. These perspectives enable the reader not only to get educated on the topic, but also to participate intelligently and responsibly in earth stewardship. The divine mandate to care for the earth is given to all humans, and therefore the initiative is always timely and valuable. The book is accessible to a general audience, and I believe that its transformative information can inspire us and those in our care both individually and collectively.

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