

Ten Types of People Who Care About Creation

<p>The Householders</p> <p>Home or church life is where this group expresses its concern for the earth. They find hope in being faithful in the spheres of influence available to them. They are the hands and feet of creation care.</p>	<p>The Simple Living Householders are generalists who want to focus on what really matters, not material clutter. Wise use of resources is important to them, and they take pains to teach practices such as recycling to their children. This group adds integrity to any congregation. However humbly, they act on what they believe.</p> <p>For the Foodies, eating is a moral issue. They recognize that how we grow our food has an enormous impact on both farm workers and other species and they eat accordingly. For some that's about buying local foods; others seek organic. Some are vegetarian or vegan. Fair wages, cruelty to animals and care for agricultural land are much on their minds.</p> <p>The Gardeners are a common type in the Mennonite Church. They overlap with the foodies. They believe all the world's ills can be solved with a backyard garden. Many garden for the sheer joy of it and find the work deeply spiritual. Some make it a ministry, providing fresh produce to a food pantry or gardening know-how to their communities. Like the foodies, they understand that how we grow our food matters.</p> <p>The Building Geeks love energy efficiency. The traditionals have caulk guns and a long track record of changing furnace filters on time. They are trying to save money for missions. The eco-hip have Kill-o-Watt meters and pamphlets on ground source heat pumps. They are trying to reduce carbon footprints. Either way, they save the church money and carbon.</p>
<p>The Regionally Rooted</p> <p>The sphere that is most significant for this group is the local community, but they experience it in different ways. The body part that describes them best might be the heart.</p>	<p>The Naturalists have a deep and abiding love of nature. They camp, hike, watch birds, walk on beaches—and sometimes skip church to do it. While gardeners enjoy cooperating with nature to bring forth something practical—like lunch—the naturalists love dragonflies or mountains or palm trees for their own sakes. Whether it is beauty, solitude or wildness, something draws them outdoors. This is where they are most likely to experience the presence of God.</p> <p>The Witnesses have direct, painful experience with environmental problems. Maybe they live in a food desert or their children have asthma due to a polluting industry nearby. Maybe they watched bulldozers turn their childhood farm into a parking lot, or saw how a lack of clean water affects a community during a service term abroad. The firsthand testimony of witnesses is a powerful gift—and hopefully a compelling motivator—to their congregations and the broader church.</p> <p>The Watershed Disciples are rooted in—and rooting for—the places where they live. They participate in local organizations that serve the common good and know the channels for getting things done. They are bridge builders as well as joiners. Some have lived in one area for many years and bring a wealth of historical perspective to their churches. Watershed disciples spearhead bike-friendly initiatives and take field trips to the local landfill. They extend God's love beyond the walls of their church to the surrounding community and ecosystems.</p>
<p>The Big Picture People</p> <p>This group brings breadth and vision to their congregations. The Apostle Paul might call them the eyes of the body.</p>	<p>The Theologians use God-language to make sense of the world. They have the gift of connecting contemporary culture and environmental issues with the Christian tradition. Some ask basic but crucial questions like “What does this have to do with Jesus Christ?” Others delve into advanced readings on faith and the environment. Theologians lead Bible studies, write church vision statements and plan creation worship services. They remind their churches why we should care about creation and help the other types recognize their gifts.</p> <p>The Activists believe in the power of political leaders to bring positive change and are sometimes frustrated by the near-sightedness of their more locally focused friends. Activists read widely on environmental issues, call their senators and attend marches. Activists embody and explain issues that many find abstract. Because they care about injustice in the broader world, their churches might too.</p> <p>The Professionals: Whether they work with a tractor or a computer, these people generously apply the expertise they've developed on the job to creation care. At their factories, farms or offices, they are quietly improving practices. Some have environmental jobs in fields such as climate science or land management. At church, their gift might be a visionary new idea--or a healthy dose of realism. Their donated labor is indispensable for some projects.</p>